

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF FINTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 232-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland (HMI) short model inspection of Fintry Primary School and Early Years Centre.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Chief Education Officer to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Fintry Primary School and Early Years Centre was inspected by Education Scotland (HMI) in January 2020 in a two-day, short model inspection. They published a report of their findings on 25 February 2020. At the time of the inspection 413 children were on the primary school roll. In the Early Years Centre provision consists of a playroom for children aged two to three years and a playroom for children aged three to five. Both rooms have direct access to a large outdoor play area.

4.2 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since August 2010. Over a third of the school roll live in deciles 1 and 2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and over 90% live in deciles 1-4 with around 17% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals. The school's provision is enhanced to support a range of pupils requiring additional support for their learning. There are high levels of inclusion across the school and almost all children access mainstream classrooms for the majority of their learning.

4.3 The school has benefited from our targeted and proportionate approaches to school improvement. In particular, though the work of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Dundee, support has been facilitated through the Attainment Advisor, our Pedagogy Team and support for the improved use of data to identify areas for improvement. This is reflected in the findings of the inspection team.

4.4 The inspection team identified the following key strengths of the school and early years centre:

- The very calm and highly inclusive ethos, underpinned by positive relationships, in the school and early years centre. This helps children to feel safe and to engage well in their learning.
- Polite, well behaved, articulate children in the school and early years centre. They are developing their social skills, and are caring towards others and accepting of differences.

- Led effectively by the headteacher and senior leaders, the positive approaches to staff's professional learning in the school and early years centre. This is helping staff at all levels to reflect on their practice and improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- The strong approaches to equity in the school and early years centre. All staff know the children and their families very well and work effectively with parents and partners. This ensures that almost all children from disadvantaged backgrounds attain and achieve well.

4.5 The following areas for improvement were agreed with the school and Dundee City Council:

- Continue to develop approaches to assessment and evidencing children's progress. This will support all teachers and practitioners to plan consistently high-quality learning experiences for children in the school and early years centre.
- Develop approaches to outdoor learning in the early years centre.
- Improve children's attainment in writing and numeracy across the school and early years centre.

4.6 Education Scotland (HMI) reports using a six-point scale for reporting performance:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

4.7 The following quality evaluations were given at this inspection:

Quality Indicator	Fintry Primary School
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

Quality Indicator	Fintry Early Years Centre
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.2 Securing children's progress	Good

Care Inspectorate Quality Indicator	Fintry Early Years Centre
Quality of care and support	Very good
Quality of staffing	Good

4.9 Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

4.10 The Education Manager(s) and the school's link Education Officer(s) will continue to monitor the school's progress and improvement in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

- 4.11 Fintry Primary School's School Improvement Plans (2019/20 and 2020/21) will include a focus on the identified areas for improvement. These will be regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement procedures.
- 4.12 Planned school improvement activity building on the school's identified strengths and addressing the areas for development include:
- Developing approaches to assessment to better evidence progress in learning for all children
 - Develop outdoor learning experiences in the early years centre
 - Improve approaches to planning of learning, teaching and assessment in literacy and numeracy to ensure raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- 4.13 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school by the school's link Education Officer(s) to monitor the school's progress towards the action points raised by the inspection.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness, poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Paul Clancy
Executive Director

Debbie Gallacher
Education Officer

September 2020

Dundee City Council

Children and Families Service

Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes

Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	25 February 2020
Name of Establishment	Fintry Primary School
Sector	Primary and Early Years
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Barbara Smith
Roll	413 primary children

Inspection Outcomes 2020

Quality Indicator	Primary Rating
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good
Quality Indicator	Early Years Centre Rating
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.1 Securing children's progress	Good

The report uses the following word scale:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Inspection Outcomes May 2007

How good are learning, teaching and achievement	Primary Class Rating
Structure of the curriculum	Good
The teaching process	Good
Pupils' learning experiences	Weak
Pupils' attainment in English language	Weak
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Weak

How well are pupils learning needs met?	Primary Rating
Meeting pupils' needs	Weak

How good is the environment for learning?	Primary Rating
Pastoral care	Good
Accommodation and facilities	Weak
Climate and relationships	Good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Adequate
Equality and fairness	Adequate

Partnerships with parents, the School Board and the community	Good
---------------------------------------------------------------	------

Leading and improving the school	Primary Rating
Leadership of the head teacher	Good
Leadership across the school	Good
Self-evaluation	Good

The report uses the following word scale:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Please note that a revised set of national quality indicators were launched in 2015 with the introduction of How Good is Our School? (4th edition). Caution should be used in making direct comparisons between new quality indicators and 'similar' previous indicators where the focus and weighting of factors has significantly changed e.g. the shift in teaching and learning towards learner autonomy away from teacher behaviours.

During the intervening period between the 2007 and 2019 HMI inspections, the local authority has continued to evaluate the quality of educational provision within the school using the version of How Good Is Our School? in use at the time.

Inspection Outcomes 2020

Key Strengths
The very calm and highly inclusive ethos, underpinned by positive relationships, in the school and early years centre. This helps children to feel safe and to engage well in their learning.
Polite, well behaved, articulate children in the school and early years centre. They are developing their social skills, and are caring towards others and accepting of differences.
Led effectively by the headteacher and senior leaders, the positive approaches to staff's professional learning in the school and early years centre. This is helping staff at all levels to reflect on their practice and improve children's experiences and outcomes.
The strong approaches to equity in the school and early years centre. All staff know the children and their families very well and work effectively with parents and partners. This ensures that almost all children from disadvantaged backgrounds attain and achieve well.

Areas for Improvement and Action
Continue to develop approaches to assessment and evidencing children's progress. This will support all teachers and practitioners to plan consistently high-quality learning experiences for children in the school and early years centre.
Develop approaches to outdoor learning in the early years centre.
Improve children's attainment in writing and numeracy across the school and early years centre.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School's Improvement Plan 2019-20 was amended to reflect the areas for improvement identified by HMIE and provide a clear strategic focus for related school improvement.

The Summarised Inspection Findings highlighted the following strengths and areas for improvement within each of the quality indicators.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment – Primary School and Early Years Centre

There is a very positive and caring ethos at Fintry Primary School, creating a safe environment where all children are valued and feel they belong. Staff support children to understand the school values through class discussion and by recognizing children's success in demonstrating the values. As a result, children are supportive of their peers and interact well across the school.

In highly effective lessons, teachers explain the purpose of the learning clearly, and discuss with children how to be successful. Most teachers use a variety of questioning and feedback techniques as well as higher-order questions to develop children's understanding of their learning. Learning is linked to skills for learning, life and work, helping children understand how to be responsible, confident, effective and successful.

The headteacher supports all staff effectively to engage in research-based learning. This commitment to improving pedagogy is an important strength of the school and is having a positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching across the school. The current focus on improving feedback is helping most children to understand next steps in learning. Almost all teachers now plan a range of well-considered individual, paired and group learning experiences to engage children and enable them to be active participants in their learning.

Staff embed the use of digital technologies to enhance learning and teaching. Children can articulate the skills they are developing, as well as using sophisticated technologies language. Digital leaders are given real responsibilities for supporting their peers and working with staff to improve the use of digital approaches in the school. As a result, the school recently achieved the Digital Schools Award.

Most teachers use both formative and summative assessments effectively to make judgements of children's progress and achievement of a level. Moderation opportunities within the school and across the associated schools are well planned. This is improving teachers' confidence in making accurate judgements in children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

Across the early years centre there is a warm and welcoming culture and ethos. Practitioners have established positive and respectful relationships with children and families who attend the setting. As a result, children feel safe and secure and all families are included. Practitioners are respectful of children's rights and listen and respond to children's ideas and interests.

Staff in the Early Years Centre give children time and space to explore and follow their interests. Practitioners plan learning experiences which promote curiosity and communication skills and track children's development. Open-ended resources stimulate engagement and learning. Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and support learning effectively.

Children aged three to five are enthusiastic and almost all are engaged and motivated in play. Almost all children are happy and confident and clearly enjoy their time in the setting. Most children are independent and are able to make choices and decisions about their play. The use of open-ended and real-life objects enable children to develop their creativity, curiosity and inquiry skills indoors. Practitioners extend children's interests within the different contexts of learning indoors. They document learning in floor-books and support and encourage children to share their ideas. Children can explore and revisit learning during purposeful and real-life play experiences.

Practitioners use a range of programmable toys, interactive boards and computers to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Practitioners work well as a team and welcome the opportunity to take on leadership roles. This includes leading family learning and literacy interventions. The team recognise and value the skills and strengths of individual team members. Commendably, they are keen to learn from each other as well as from reflecting on video footage of their practice. New practitioners are supported well through opportunities to observe others delivering interventions and group times.

Sensitive to children's socio-economic backgrounds, practitioners plan appropriate interventions to improve outcomes for children and families. Effective work to improve practitioners' skills in supporting children's early language and communication is having a positive impact on children's progress, particularly in listening and talking skills.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement – Primary School

In Session 2018/19, most children in Primary 1 and Primary 7 achieved expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. At Primary 4, most children achieved expected levels in listening and talking and the majority in reading, writing and numeracy. Children with additional support needs, care experienced learners and learners from SIMD deciles 1 and 2 are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

Overall, attainment in literacy is good. Most children at early level can say single sounds and the majority are blending with confidence, and are using their increasing knowledge of letters and patterns to read phonetic words. At first level, most learners read aloud with confidence and use a range of strategies to decode unknown words. They answer literal questions with accuracy, but require more support with evaluative or inferential questions. Children working at second level make relevant notes and identify main ideas of a text with appropriate detail. They read familiar and unfamiliar texts with fluency and correctly identify genre, theme and techniques used by the author. Across the school, teachers should continue to develop the reading skills of learners through listening to stories and reading for enjoyment on a regular basis.

Across the school, the majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. At early level most children can count to ten in order and a few recognise number values to 30. At first level the majority of children can add and subtract two digit numbers. Most are confident in using the two and five times tables to perform calculations. The majority can calculate simple divisions by a single digit. At second level the majority of children can solve simple equations and can identify the place value in numbers with up to seven digits. A few children can find the factors of two digit numbers.

Almost all children are making good progress in the development a range of skills through participating in a range of activities. This includes a wide range of sports and other clubs, as well as a successful drumming and piping club. Most children are developing their confidence well in applying their skills, for example in science, physical education and health and wellbeing. Most understand how to behave responsibly and children take responsibility to resolve any disagreements with their peers. Children understand well the challenges which others experience and are committed to the school's initiatives to help others. For example, through acting as playground buddies or adding to the school's food or clothing banks.

The school's strong focus on equity ensures all children are included well in all school activities, both within and out-with the school day. The strong sense of community and belonging in the school is impacting positively on children's attendance and engagement in their learning. Staff know children and their families very well and are adept at identifying children at risk of missing out through socio-economic deprivation. They take effective action to ensure all children can access activities which will develop their skills.

QI 3.2 Securing children's progress – Early Years Centre

Most children aged two to three years are making good progress in their learning. They benefit from strong attachments to the adults who care for them. As they explore their environment, most children demonstrate confidence and natural curiosity. Most children can communicate their needs and wants and are developing a range of vocabulary to support this.

Almost all children aged three to five years are making good progress in communication and early language. They benefit from a range of intervention programmes to support their skills in listening and talking and to develop an awareness of print. For example, the highly effective programme of activities, developed in partnership with speech and language colleagues, which are developing children's listening skills well.

Most children aged three to five are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. They know the number sequence to ten and are beginning to recognise numerals to ten. A few children have an awareness of larger numbers. Most children are developing the language of measure using loose parts resources. Most children recognise basic two-dimensional shapes.

Almost all children aged three to five are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They have strong attachments with key practitioners, they are developing friendships and show care for one another. Children are aware of good hygiene practices, almost all remember to wash their hands before snack and take part in the tooth-brushing programme. Almost all children are developing their independence skills well through taking ownership of their learning environment, for example setting out paints, preparing snack, and tidying up at the end of the session.

Overall, most children are making good progress in learning across the curriculum. The quality and variety of experiences particularly in science, technology and expressive arts results in children developing good problem solving, exploration and inquiry skills.

Practitioners are very aware of children's socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and the impact this can have on children's learning. They make discrete provision and effective support to families where this is required. Practitioners use a range of data to review and evaluate the impact of intervention programmes, such as the effective programme to improve children's listening and talking. Overall the strong approaches to equity are having a positive impact on the attainment and achievement of the most disadvantaged children. In particular there are significant improvements in children's listening skills and vocabulary acquisition.

Early Years practice worth sharing more widely:

The setting has worked closely with speech and language therapy colleagues to improve practitioners' skills in supporting children's language and communication. As part of this work, all practitioners took part in self-assessment using video footage of their practice. They were filmed interacting with children in a variety of situations. They evaluated the video footage with a buddy practitioner using a set of good practice criteria. This has impacted very positively on practitioners' skills. The video footage allows them to analyse and reflect on their practice and has highlighted things that they do that they were

unaware of. They use this reflection to make conscious changes to their practice and repeat the process of filming and reviewing to secure improvement.

Following publication of the inspection findings, the school's Head Teacher has taken action in leading related school improvements. Key activity to date has included the following:

Continue to develop approaches to assessment and evidencing children's progress. This will support all teachers and practitioners to plan consistently high-quality learning experiences for children in the school and early years centre.

Senior leaders have planned opportunities for teachers to engage with the moderation cycle to develop understanding of the impact of assessment approaches on children's progress and outcomes.

School staff will be offered a range of planned moderation activities in session 2020/2021 to support the gathering of evidence across all curricular areas to provide more robust evidence on children's progress across the curriculum.

Early years staff will have planned opportunities to engage and work with tracking tools to help identify next steps in learning and to develop the use observations to further support this work.

Develop approaches to outdoor learning in the early years centre.

The Early Years staff will continue to build on good practice in outdoor learning with a range of planned learning opportunities for staff. The focus of this work is to extend and deepen understanding of the importance and impact of learning outdoors and ways in which staff can support children to develop curiosity and engagement.

Improve children's attainment in writing and numeracy across the school and early years centre.

The school is developing further the Big Write resource to provide a progressive framework of learning for children across the school. This programme has a strong focus on tools for writing and the this development work will be underpinned by the implementation of a listening and talking programme, Voice 21, to provide a coherent literacy framework for the school.

In the Early Years Centre opportunities will be provided for practitioners to track and monitor children's achievements in order to support further planning for gaps in the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Full details of the Summarised inspection findings are available at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=2586>

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Clancy', with a large loop at the start and a trailing flourish.

Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Audrey May', with a large loop at the end.

Audrey May, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)

Barbara Smith, Head Teacher, Fintry Primary School and Early Years Centre

25 February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2020, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Fintry Primary School and Early Years Centre. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The very calm and highly inclusive ethos, underpinned by positive relationships, in the school and early years centre. This helps children to feel safe and to engage well in their learning.
- Polite, well behaved, articulate children in the school and early years centre. They are developing their social skills, and are caring towards others and accepting of differences.
- Led effectively by the headteacher and senior leaders, the positive approaches to staff's professional learning in the school and early years centre. This is helping staff at all levels to reflect on their practice and improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- The strong approaches to equity in the school and early years centre. All staff know the children and their families very well and work effectively with parents and partners. This ensures that almost all children from disadvantaged backgrounds attain and achieve well.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Dundee City Council.

- Continue to develop approaches to assessment and evidencing children's progress. This will support all teachers and practitioners to plan consistently high-quality learning experiences for children in the school and early years centre.
- Develop approaches to outdoor learning in the early years centre.
- Improve children's attainment in writing and numeracy across the school and early years centre.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Fintry Primary School and Early Years Centre

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Securing children's progress	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for the nursery class

Care Inspectorate standards	Grade
Quality of care and support	very good
Quality of staffing	good

Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and recommendations.

This letter and a more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=2586>

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dundee City Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Liz Angus
HM Inspector

Karen Lock
Care Inspector