

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF BALDRAGON ACADEMY

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 280-2023

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland (HMI) inspection of Baldragon Academy.

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 HMI Inspection report,
 - iii) instructs the Executive Director to update Committee following ongoing Education Scotland engagement.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 Baldragon Academy was inspected by His Majesty's (HM) Inspectors from Education Scotland in January 2023 using the short model inspection, evaluating just two Quality Indicators (QI) from How Good is our School (HGIOS) 4: QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment and QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement.
- 4.2 The inspection took place in the first week of the new term, following a two-week holiday period. The pupils' week was also disrupted by a one-day school closure mid-week because of industrial action.
- 4.3 Education Scotland published the draft inspection findings in error on 28 March 2023 with no notification given to Dundee City Council. Education Scotland has subsequently apologised to the school and the local authority for this error.
- 4.4 Education Scotland published a report of their inspection findings on 13 June 2023.
- 4.5 At the time of the inspection 849 pupils were on the school roll. 31.4 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals. 47.1 per cent of pupils were living in the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland. 39.9% per cent of pupils were recorded as having additional support needs. The school was also disproportionately affected by the pandemic with higher-than-average pupil and staff absence during sessions 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- 4.6 The senior leadership team comprises the Head Teacher, four Depute Head Teachers and a Business Manager. The Head Teacher has been in post for four years. One Depute Head Teacher is in an acting position. There have been significant changes in leadership roles across the school in recent years.

4.7 A local authority Enhanced Support Area (ESA) is located within the school, led by a principal teacher. At present the ESA has 45 young people (S1-23; S2-16; S3-6), with a diversity of complex needs.

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

- The headteacher, the senior leadership team and almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. This helps them to provide caring and targeted support for individual young people and their families, including those who learn in the Enhanced Support Areas.
- Staff and partners work well together to provide young people with a range of opportunities for success, such as the School of Sport, the Baldragon Barista Academy, the Baldragon Bee Academy and the Rural Skills Group. As a result, young people develop important skills and qualities.

4.9 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Head Teacher and a representative from Dundee City Council:

- Develop a school culture, underpinned by agreed school values, that promotes higher aspirations and expectations of all young people. This needs to focus on improving young people's attendance and late coming, and the attitudes to learning and behaviour of a minority of young people.
- Develop more robust plans, building on the 'Baldragon Way', to improve learning and teaching across the school. This should ensure that all young people benefit from high-quality learning and teaching that meets their needs effectively.
- Work with staff from the local authority to improve attainment as an immediate priority across the school, especially in S4, by S5 and by S6.
- Continue to develop effective approaches across the school that assist staff in reviewing regularly all young people's progress and in providing appropriate support that meets all young people's needs.

4.10 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

4.11 The following quality evaluations were given at this inspection:

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Weak
Raising attainment and achievement	Unsatisfactory

4.12 As a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. In liaison with Dundee City Council regarding the school's capacity to improve, HM Inspectors will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within six months of the publication of the letter. Education Scotland will write to parents/carers of the school at that time detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that they intend to take, as agreed with Dundee City Council. Appendix 1 contains a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings.

- 4.13 Baldragon Academy has fully incorporated the recommendations from the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) into their improvement plan.
- 4.14 Key areas for improvement identified include:
- Staff need to have high aspirations for all young people
 - The school needs to put measures in place to minimise disruption to learning by improving young people's attendance, including late coming
 - All staff need to develop a more consistent approach to promoting and maintaining positive relationships and behaviour
 - All staff to embed the 'Baldragon Way', to ensure that all young people consistently experience high quality learning and teaching
 - All staff to consistently use the school-wide tracking system to monitor the progress of all young people and to ensure that appropriate supports are in place at the appropriate time
 - Staff need to develop further and implement more rigorously the school's presentation policy
 - Continue to develop links and grow partnerships – e.g., local colleges, Active Schools, Community Learning and Development and Young Carers to develop the confidence and skills of all young people, and to ultimately improve outcomes for all.
- 4.15 The Education Manager and the school's link Education Officer, reporting to the Chief Education Officer and the Executive Director, will continue to monitor and support the school's progress in relation to the identified areas for improvement. Review meetings involving the Head Teacher, Education Officer, Education Manager, Chief Education Officer and Executive Director are currently taking place on a fortnightly basis in Baldragon Academy.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director

Paul Fleming
Chief Education Officer

September 2023

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Children and Families Service

Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes

Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	June 2023
Name of Establishment	Baldragon Academy
Sector	Secondary
Name of Head Teacher	Mr Hugh McAninch
Roll	849 secondary young people

Inspection Outcomes 2023

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Weak
Raising attainment and achievement	Unsatisfactory

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

Key Strengths

The headteacher, the senior leadership team and almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. This helps them to provide caring and targeted support for individual young people and their families, including those who learn in the Enhanced Support Areas.

Staff and partners work well together to provide young people with a range of opportunities for success, such as the School of Sport, the Baldragon Barista Academy, the Baldragon Bee Academy and the Rural Skills Group. As a result, young people develop important skills and qualities.

Areas for Improvement

Develop a school culture, underpinned by agreed school values, that promotes higher aspirations and expectations of all young people. This needs to focus on improving young people's attendance and late coming, and the attitudes to learning and behaviour of a minority of young people.

Develop more robust plans, building on the 'Baldragon Way', to improve learning and teaching across the school. This should ensure that all young people benefit from high-quality learning and teaching that meets their needs effectively.

Work with staff from the local authority to improve attainment as an immediate priority across the school, especially in S4, by S5 and by S6.

Continue to develop effective approaches across the school that assist staff in reviewing regularly all young people's progress and in providing appropriate support that meets all young people's needs.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School Improvement Plan 2022-23 was amended to reflect the areas for improvement identified by HMI 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.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Strengths

- In most lessons, positive relationships are evident between staff and young people.
- Teachers are beginning to share the purpose of lessons more consistently with young people.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. The majority of teachers use questioning to check understanding.
- Senior leaders and staff are beginning to work well together, using the 'Baldragon Way', to improve learning and teaching.
- Most departments work with other schools in the local authority to understand standards in the senior phase.
- Staff have developed a tracking and monitoring system across the school. This system includes information gathered during regular monitoring points regarding young people's progress in all subjects and at all levels. The tracking and monitoring system includes information about identified additional support information for learners, where appropriate.
- The majority of learners in the senior phase can identify where they have made progress across the curriculum and their next steps in their learning.

Areas for Improvement

- All staff need to develop a more consistent and rigorous approach to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct from young people.
- Staff need to develop more consistently an improved culture of aspiration and ambition where all young people are supported and challenged to enable them to benefit well from their learning.
- Senior leaders recognise the need for staff to develop further their approaches to sharing feedback with young people. This will help to ensure that all young people are aware of their individual areas for development and able to make appropriate progress in their learning.
- Teachers should consider how to use digital technology more creatively to provide learning that is better matched to the needs of individuals.
- A more consistent, school-wide approach to the use of the tracking and monitoring system will ensure appropriate supports are in place for all young people.

Raising attainment and achievement

Strengths

- Staff are engaging regularly in discussions and moderation activities within the school, especially linked to listening and talking.
- Senior leaders and staff are also engaging enthusiastically in moderation activities with colleagues from the local authority, including the school's associated primary schools.
- The school presents young people for a range of SCQF qualifications, including skills for work courses and other awards, such as wellbeing awards. Young people gain valuable skills through these qualifications.
- Young people contribute to work linked to the school's aspiration to gain a silver award in the Rights Respecting Schools programme. They are also involved in work linked to the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme.
- The new School of Sport initiative has attracted a large number of young people. It is being used to develop young people's confidence and leadership, as well as their support for others, through their participation in basketball, swimming and football. A number of young people are also participating in a Rural Skills Group. This is helping them to develop skills in literacy and numeracy, and it is contributing positively to their wellbeing.
- Senior leaders and staff are working well with a range of partners, for example staff from local colleges, Active Schools, Community Learning and Development and Young Carers, to develop the confidence and skills of young people.
- Senior leaders and almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. This is helping them to provide caring and targeted support for individual young people and their families.
- Staff continue to use the school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation to support initiatives that benefit young people, such as Baldragon Barista Academy, Baldragon Bee Academy, and Baldragon Bike Academy.

Areas for improvement

- To improve all leavers' opportunities of achieving literacy and numeracy qualifications, senior leaders and guidance teachers are beginning to target more effectively young people that are at risk of not achieving.
- Staff should continue to develop effective approaches across the school to enable them to review regularly all young people's progress and provide appropriate, targeted support that meets their needs.
- Senior leaders should also continue to work regularly with all middle leaders and teachers to improve the quality of all young people's attainment across curriculum areas. Senior leaders and staff need to improve attainment as an immediate priority across the school, especially in S4, by S5 and by S6.
- Ensure that evidence of impact of PEF interventions are gathered to support the use of this funding
- Improve the tracking and monitoring of groups of young people, including young carers or young people living in poverty
- Improve attendance

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

Almost all of Dundee City Council secondary schools have established Enhanced Support Areas (ESAs) in order to meet young people's diverse additional support needs. At present the ESA at Baldragon Academy comprises: 22 young people from S1 and S2, supported in two rooms (ESA 1 and ESA 2) by three teachers and five support staff. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in children with complex communication needs attending Baldragon Academy over the next few years. The improvement plan for the ESA has been incorporated into the revised whole school improvement plan.

The report is available as part of the Summary of Inspection Findings at:

<https://education.gov.scot/media/twai4qrs/baldragon-academy-sif-130623.pdf>

Key activity to date has included the following:

Following the publication of the report in June 2023, the school has:

- Updated its school improvement plan for this session, and extended it to June 2024. This closely reflects the actions required by the report. In the main, this also reflects the plan that was in place since the start of session 2022-23.
- Revised approaches to learning and teaching by establishing a Learning & Teaching standard, a 'commitment' for teaching staff, which draws on key features of How Good Is Our School 4 and highly effective practice(s), with clearly agreed 'non negotiables' and expectations of ambition.
- Following an August 'soft launch' the school is now evaluating the early impact with young people and learning councils in preparation for an agreed school policy implementation.
- Consolidated approaches to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) which are providing greater opportunities for teachers to learn together, share best practice, quality assure and evaluate learning experiences and teaching practices – with a specific focus on Assessment for Learning strategies.
- Continued engagement with the Leading Learners programme and the Pedagogy Team.
- Revised the Tracking and Monitoring calendar to provide greater scrutiny and quality assurance.
- Implemented rigorous approaches to tracking and monitoring and adhered to this. Subject department leaders are beginning to evidence a better understanding of tracking and monitoring to raise attainment and better support learners and learning needs.
- Cooperative learning training has been provided for specific departments.
- Further developed systems to track and monitor those young people who are at risk of not achieving and are identified within a key context measure – SIMD, care experienced, young carers, free school meals, additional support need.
- Further developed targeted approaches to attainment in literacy and numeracy at SCQF Levels 4 and 5.
- Begun to implement pathways to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 6.
- Implemented a 'fast track to five' program, focusing on young people who are most at risk of not achieving.
- Added to the existing quality assurance process and conducted an additional program of Headteacher led classroom observations, including lesson follow up and teacher feedback.
- Continued to improve approaches to tracking and monitoring of attendance, through the revision of school protocols and procedures.
- Completed additional teaching and non-teaching staff refreshers on child protection and safeguarding

In addition:

- Peer DHT from another school to support the review of approaches to supporting learning across the school
- Leading Learners project has continued – as a result, in Baldragon, 86% of the National 5 pupils who participated either achieved or exceeding their working grades and 79% of the Higher or Advance Higher pupils achieved or exceeded their working grades
- Targeted support for raising attainment through Easter school and small group tuition
- Application in for verification for accreditation for STEM Nation Award
- Launch of the School of Sport Academy, partnership with Sportscotland and the Dundee West Community Sports Hub

Full details of the summarised inspection findings are available at:

<https://education.gov.scot/media/twai4grs/baldragon-academy-sif-130623.pdf>

Signed

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

Audrey May, Executive Director of Children and Families Service

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13 June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Baldragon Academy. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- The headteacher, the senior leadership team and almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. This helps them to provide caring and targeted support for individual young people and their families, including those who learn in the Enhanced Support Areas.
- Staff and partners work well together to provide young people with a range of opportunities for success, such as the School of Sport, the Baldragon Barista Academy, the Baldragon Bee Academy and the Rural Skills Group. As a result, young people develop important skills and qualities.

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

- Develop a school culture, underpinned by agreed school values, that promotes higher aspirations and expectations of all young people. This needs to focus on improving young people's attendance and late coming, and the attitudes to learning and behaviour of a minority of young people.
- Develop more robust plans, building on the 'Baldragon Way', to improve learning and teaching across the school. This should ensure that all young people benefit from high-quality learning and teaching that meets their needs effectively.
- Work with staff from the local authority to improve attainment as an immediate priority across the school, especially in S4, by S5 and by S6.
- Continue to develop effective approaches across the school that assist staff in reviewing regularly all young people's progress and in providing appropriate support that meets all young people's needs.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). 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 Baldrigon Academy

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

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:
[Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland.](#)

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Dundee City Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within six months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Dundee City Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Celia McArthur
HM Inspector