

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 22 APRIL 2026

REPORT ON: INSPECTION OF BALLUMBIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS CENTRE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 104-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform committee on the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Scotland (HMIE) inspection of Ballumbie Primary School and Early Years Centre in January 2026.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee notes:

- a. the findings and key messages of the external inspection; and
- b. arrangements in place to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the agreement of this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings are subject to external scrutiny. Secondary, Special and Primary schools with or without ELC provision are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE). ELC provision, including those within a Primary school, are inspected either by HMIE or Care Inspectorate as single agencies, or jointly as a shared inspection model. Inspections use national frameworks and a six-point evaluation scale, with safeguarding considered in all cases. HMIE and Care Inspectorate publish reports setting out strengths, areas for improvement and capacity to improve. More detailed information about approaches to inspections in schools and ELC settings is included in Appendix 1.

4.2 Ballumbie Primary School and Early Years Centre were inspected by HMIE in January 2026. There were two separate models of inspection, a full model inspection focused on four quality indicators was undertaken with the primary school, whilst a full model of inspection focused on three quality indicators was undertaken with the early years centre. Both inspection models also had a focus upon safeguarding. HMIE published reports of both sets of findings on 17 March 2026.

Table 1 How Good is Our School (HGIOS) Quality Indicators

1.3	Leadership of change
2.3	Learning, teaching, and assessment
3.1	Ensuring wellbeing, equality & inclusion
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement

Table 2 A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Quality Indicators

Curriculum
Learning, teaching and assessment
Wellbeing, inclusion and equality

- 4.3 Ballumbie Primary School is a non-denominational school located in the City of Dundee. At the time of the inspection, 388 children were on the primary school roll across 14 classes. Ballumbie Early Years Centre provides both full year and term time early learning and childcare (ELC) provision. At the time of inspection, there was a total of 65 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school, and there were 14 children aged two years.
- 4.4 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since May 2021. The Head Teacher is supported by an acting Depute Head Teacher and a Principal Teacher Supporting Learners.
- 4.5 Approximately 76% of children who attend the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. At the time of inspection, the school reported that approximately 29% of children on the roll require additional support with their learning. There is approximately 28% of children in P6 and P7 registered for free school meals. The school's Pupil Equity Fund allocation is £196,000.

5.0 KEY INSPECTION FINDINGS BALLUMBIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND BALLUMBIE EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Key Strengths for the Primary School & Early Years Centre

- 5.1 Appendix 2 provides a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings for both the Primary School and the Early Years Centre. The inspection team found the following strengths:
- Children across the school and nursery are polite and eager to learn. They have a strong sense of belonging, are proud of their achievements and demonstrate the shared values.
 - Led by the effective headteacher, staff work well as a team. They are keen to develop their individual and collective skills to help improve outcomes for children.
 - The approaches staff take to supporting children's wellbeing in the school and nursery. Wellbeing is central to the work of the school. Children learn within a highly inclusive environment allowing them to 'support, succeed and shine' in line with the shared vision.
 - Staff in the nursery have developed well-considered and calming environments both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are curious, creative and inquisitive and engage purposefully in play experiences.

Areas for Improvement for the Primary School & Early Years Centre

- 5.2 The following areas for improvement were identified:
- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure these are of a consistent high-quality across the school.
 - Staff in the school and nursery should work together to ensure children experience a broad and relevant curriculum. In doing so, they should support children to develop skills and knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
 - All staff in the school should continue to develop approaches to involve all children in leadership and decision making. They should support children to understand how their views improve the work of the school.

6.0 INSPECTION EVALUATIONS

6.1 During inspections HM Inspectors gather evidence to enable them to evaluate the school and the nursery's work using quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition) and a Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors.

6.2 HMIE uses 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

6.3 HMIE evaluations for Ballumbie Primary School following their inspection are:

Quality Indicator	
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

6.4 HMIE evaluations for Ballumbie Early Years Centre following their inspection are:

Quality Indicator	
Curriculum	Good
Learning, teaching, and assessment	Very Good
Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	Very Good

6.5 HMIE wrote to parents and carers to confirm that, as a result of the inspection findings, HM Inspectors are confident that the school and early years centre have the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection (see Appendix 3). Dundee City Council will inform parents and carers about the school's progress through Ballumbie Primary's annual School Improvement Report.

6.6 Ballumbie Primary School and Ballumbie Early Years Centre Improvement Plans 2026/27 and beyond, 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 processes.

6.7 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school and early years centre by the school's link Quality Improvement Education Officers to ensure the positive improvement journey continues and monitor progress towards the action points raised in the inspection. Furthermore, as part of the Service's 'Every Dundee Learner Matters' collaborative improvement strategy, Ballumbie Primary School's Improvement Planning Partnership will continue to support and challenge school improvement.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 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.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director
Children and Families Service

Paul Fleming
Chief Education Officer
Head of Education, Learning and Inclusion
Children and Families Service

March 2026

APPENDIX 1

INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE (ELC) SETTINGS – FRAMEWORKS, MODELS AND OUTPUTS

PURPOSE

This appendix explains how inspections are carried out across primary and secondary schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, and why inspection reports presented to Scrutiny and Audit Committee may differ in structure, content and attachments.

It is intended to support Scrutiny and Audit Committee members in interpreting inspection papers and is applicable to all future inspection reports.

Schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings are subject to external scrutiny. Secondary, Special and Primary schools with or without ELC provision are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE). ELC provision, including those within a Primary school, are inspected either by HMIE or Care Inspectorate as single agencies, or jointly as a shared inspection model. Inspections use national frameworks and a six-point evaluation scale, with safeguarding considered in all cases. HMIE and Care Inspectorate publish reports setting out strengths, areas for improvement and capacity to improve.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

All primary and secondary schools are inspected by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) using the same national inspection framework, [*How Good Is Our School? \(Fourth Edition\)*](#). This framework applies consistently across both sectors.

HMIE use two inspection models in schools. A short model inspection focuses on two Quality Indicators, selected from the same set used in a full inspection. A full model inspection considers four Quality Indicators (QI) These are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
- QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

In a short model inspection focuses on Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2.

Safeguarding is always considered as part of the inspection process.

Regardless of whether a short or full model inspection is undertaken, the outputs are consistent.

Following inspection, HMIE publish:

- an **Inspection Report** in the form of a letter to parents. This includes:
 - key strengths
 - areas for improvement
 - the Quality Indicator evaluations using the six-point scale, and
 - the overall inspection outcome.
- **Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF)**, which provide more detailed narrative evidence against the Quality Indicators evaluated.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE INSPECTIONS

Early learning and childcare settings are inspected using a different national framework, [A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare sectors](#). This was initially launched in draft form in January 2025 but only used in inspections from September 2025 onwards.

This framework includes eleven Quality Indicators aligned to the following four themes:

- Leadership
- Children thrive and develop in quality spaces
- Children play and learn
- Children are supported to achieve

Safeguarding and child protection is considered as part of all inspections, irrespective of the model. As ELC inspections now operate under a shared inspection framework, this means that inspections may be carried out by HMIE alone, Care Inspectorate alone, or HMIE and Care Inspectorate jointly. This approach began from September 2025 onwards.

This affects both the Quality Indicators (QI) evaluated and the format of inspection reports and letters. This means that inspection Scrutiny and Audit Committee papers for related ELC provisions, including where the ELC provision is part of a primary school, can look different from school inspection papers and from each other.

The Quality Indicators inspected during each model of inspection are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Quality Indicators associated with each inspection model, listed under each Theme

Shared Inspection: Care Inspectorate and HMIE Quality Indicators (4)	Single Inspection: HMIE Quality Indicators (3)	Single Inspection: Care Inspectorate Quality Indicators (3)
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning, teaching and assessment Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurturing care and support Children’s progress 	Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum Learning, teaching and assessment Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing, inclusion and equality 	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership, management of staff and resources Children play and learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playing, learning and developing Children are supported to achieve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurturing care and support
Safeguarding and child protection		

WHY COMMITTEE REPORTS DIFFER

Differences in Scrutiny and Audit Committee inspection papers reflect the inspection framework used, the inspection model applied, and whether one or more inspection agencies were involved. They do not reflect differences in the level of scrutiny or assurance.

In summary:

- inspection reports for primary schools without ELC provision and secondary schools are consistent because the framework, models and outputs are the same; and
- inspection reports for ELC provisions, including where the ELC provision is part of a primary school, may vary because inspections can be single HMIE inspections or shared HMIE and the Care Inspectorate inspections, because different Quality Indicators are evaluated, and because agencies publish their findings in different ways.

For transparency and accuracy, inspection findings are reported to Scrutiny and Audit Committee as published, without re-scoring or aligning Quality Indicators across different frameworks.

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APPENDIX 2

Dundee City Council

Children and Families Service

Scrutiny and Audit Committee Report Summary Notes

Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agency	HMIE
Report Publication Date	17 March 2026
Name of Establishment	Ballumbie Primary School and Ballumbie Early Years Centre
Sector	Primary and Early Years
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Paula Cheghall
Roll	388 primary children and 79 early years children

Inspection Outcomes 2026

Quality Indicator	Ballumbie Primary School
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

Quality Indicator	Ballumbie Early Years Centre
Curriculum	Good
Learning, teaching, and assessment	Very Good
Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	Very Good

The reports use 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 January 2026

Key Strengths

- Children across the school and nursery are polite and eager to learn. They have a strong sense of belonging, are proud of their achievements and demonstrate the shared values.
- Led by the effective headteacher, staff work well as a team. They are keen to develop their individual and collective skills to help improve outcomes for children.
- The approaches staff take to supporting children's wellbeing in the school and nursery. Wellbeing is central to the work of the school. Children learn within a highly inclusive environment allowing them to 'support, succeed and shine' in line with the shared vision.
- Staff in the nursery have developed well-considered and calming environments both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are curious, creative and inquisitive and engage purposefully in play experiences.

Areas for Improvement

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure these are of a consistent high-quality across the school.
- Staff in the school and nursery should work together to ensure children experience a broad and relevant curriculum. In doing so, they should support children to develop skills and knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
- All staff in the school should continue to develop approaches to involve all children in leadership and decision making. They should support children to understand how their views improve the work of the school.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report (see Appendix 3) and both sets of Summarised Inspection Findings; the School and Early Years Centre's next Improvement Plan 2026/27 will 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.

Ballumbie Primary School

QI 1.3 - Leadership of change

- The school's shared vision and values of 'support all, succeed together and shine bright' underpins the work of the school. These are well embedded across the community, with creativity, ambition, respect and equality (CARE) values visible and increasingly referenced by children when discussing behaviour, learning and relationships.
- Children, parents and staff collaborated to refresh the vision, ensuring strong shared ownership and alignment between expectations and daily practices.
- The Head Teacher demonstrates strong insight into school strengths and areas requiring improvement, setting aspirational but achievable expectations for all children and is effectively developing a whole school collaborative approach to leadership at all levels and managing change effectively.
- A well-considered quality assurance calendar is implemented effectively with a clear focus on improving outcomes for all children. This ensures regular learning observations, jotter monitoring and learner conversations, leading to effective quality assurance procedures, consistency in teaching and increased attainment.

- Staff are encouraged and empowered to embrace leadership roles in the school and engage actively in professional learning, including recent training focused on improving writing pedagogy.
- Staff have led developments in anti-bullying, assessment and moderation, meta-skills and coaching, they share their learning and support colleagues to implement change and improvements. The headteacher should continue to develop the capacity of the whole staff team to lead aspects of school improvements.
- Leadership roles are shared across staff teams, with teachers leading improvement groups and children taking roles such as house captains, digital leaders and ambassadors leading to improved confidence and pupil engagement.
- Pupil Equity Funding is used carefully to support targeted groups, informed by a strong understanding of the school's social and economic context. Senior leaders should continue to involve parents and children more fully in determining the focus of PEF to address any poverty-related attainment gaps.

QI 2.3 - Learning, teaching and assessment

- Nurturing, supportive relationships underpin the school's learning culture, supported by the 'Ballumbie Consistencies and Relationships Policy' resulting in a reduced number of disruptive incidents. Overall, behaviour across the school is of a high standard. When necessary, staff support children sensitively to regulate their emotions and reengage with learning quickly.
- Children learn in classrooms that are calm, well organised and purposefully designed, with displays that support independent learning and consistent expectations across the school.
- Children are motivated and engaged in learning, working well independently and collaboratively, though a few disengage when lessons are overly teacher-led or lengthy.
- Teachers provide clear explanations and increasingly use open-ended questions, though continued development is needed to deepen pupil thinking consistently. This practice should now be shared more widely. Staff use praise well to encourage children and celebrate their strengths. Most teachers provide helpful feedback for children in a range of ways, including verbal and written comments in jotters.
- Digital technology is used effectively to support children's learning, with weekly digital skills lessons; Teachers should now ensure that children develop their digital skills more progressively as they move through the school.
- Assessment is well structured through a school-wide calendar, with a range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments used to identify gaps and inform interventions. In all classes, teachers use a variety of appropriate assessment methods, including formative and summative, in literacy and numeracy. As planned, the headteacher should continue to provide opportunities for staff to engage in moderation activities with external learning communities. This should help further strengthen staff confidence.
- Children have a voice in planning aspects of learning contexts. They share with teachers what they already know and what they want to know more about at the start of each topic. All staff know their children as individuals and are aware of any barriers to learning.
- Senior leaders have implemented an effective whole school tracking system. This allows staff to monitor children's progress and attainment termly in literacy and numeracy, supporting timely adjustments to interventions and plan next steps in learning for all children using informed evidence.

QI 3.1 - Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Children's wellbeing is central to the work and life of the school, The whole staff team has worked very well together to improve wellbeing, equality and inclusion. All staff know the children and their families very well. Staff understand family circumstances and local challenges well.
- The staff team has high expectations for children's behaviour in school. Across the school, children are polite and respectful to staff, each other and visitors. Most children play well together in the playground where they enjoy activities with their peers.
- Behaviour is positive and respectful, supported by restorative approaches and clear expectations.
- Almost all children thrive in a high-quality environment. The school building is used very well to promote learning and support wellbeing. Children benefit from carefully considered use of each

space and room. Flexible learning spaces support children who require small-group or individual settings, helping them regulate and re-engage.

- Children confidently use wellbeing language and understand what they need to feel safe and healthy. Staff use a range of wellbeing assessment tools very well to identify any concerns or wellbeing needs. Children know they can speak to a chosen adult should they have concerns or issues which helps them to feel safe. They feel listened to and are confident they and their families will be offered support if required.
- Physical activity and health learning are strengths, with children participating in varied sports and understanding healthy lifestyle choices. Children have enjoyed success in a range of local sporting festivals and competitions. Children are proud to talk of their achievements and can describe confidently the positive impact of being active on their bodies and minds.
- Children develop responsibility and citizenship through school leadership roles and contributions to the wider community.
- Targeted interventions and strong multi-agency partnerships meet the needs of vulnerable learners effectively. A range of partners support children who need extra help. Children and their families are involved in decision making that affects their life at school.
- Barriers to participation, including financial pressures and attendance challenges, are actively addressed through the school and family support worker and community links.
- Children arrive at school with varied backgrounds and challenges, and the school supports them in understanding the diversity of their local community and Scotland through activities like assemblies and anti-racism campaigns. Staff should continue developing the curriculum to help children appreciate diversity and challenge discrimination.

QI 3.2 - Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- Most children achieved expected national levels in listening & talking, reading and numeracy, with positive overall progress.
- Writing attainment is improving, with most children at early and first levels meeting expectations and a majority meeting expectations at second level. A few children are exceeding national expectations across literacy and numeracy.
- Most children requiring additional support are making good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in Literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Attainment in Numeracy and Mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Attainment Over Time

- Attendance sits at 92.16%, aligning with national figures, with improvements linked to targeted support interventions.
- Activity-based breakfast clubs have improved attendance for identified pupils.
- Attainment continues to rise due to strengthened tracking, moderation and targeted improvements such as writing initiatives.

Overall Quality of Learners' Achievements

- Achievements are celebrated through weekly assemblies, certificates and recognition of achievements from home.
- Children participate in varied sports clubs, developing resilience and teamwork. A few pupils lead lunchtime activities and have gained national accreditation.
- School plans to strengthen tracking of wider achievement participation.

Equity for All Learners

- PEF is used to target literacy, numeracy and wellbeing barriers, with evidence of narrowing attainment gaps.
- Leaders will refine measurable targets to assess intervention impact more effectively.
- Cost of the school day is minimised through financial support for trips and activities.

Key activity to date has included the following:

- The Head Teacher has led a whole staff development session to ensure full understanding of the inspection findings, including strengths and identified areas for improvement.
- The Head Teacher has engaged with families and staff in relation to PEF planning and spending in advance of next academic session.
- Initial review of outdoor learning has begun with school staff to bring consistency to approaches and experiences for all children.
- Further engagement with families to ensure more detailed input and understanding of planning to meet the needs of their child.
- All teaching staff have now undertaken CYPIC training in conjunction with the pedagogy team and a whole-school approach to writing has been developed which will be rolled out next session

Ballumbie Primary School Priorities

- Develop and embed high-quality play pedagogy across Primary 1–3 to ensure consistent, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that strengthen progress and participation.
- Review of whole-school curriculum to ensure it is broad, relevant and enables all children to build skills and knowledge consistently across all areas of learning.
- Strengthen and align leadership skills across the entire staff team to widen opportunities for distributed leadership and enhance whole-school improvement.
- Improve the quality of feedback and pace of learning across all classes to increase learner engagement, ensuring children remain present, motivated, appropriately challenged, and are active participants in their progress.
- School staff will continue with planned improvement activities for the remainder of this school session as agreed by HM Inspectors and as a result the School Improvement Plan will be adapted accordingly for session 2026/27.

Ballumbie Early Years Centre

Curriculum

- The well considered curriculum for children aged 3 and above, is firmly based in play and is underpinned by national and local authority guidance and the 'Ballumbie Building Blocks'.
- Staff use their knowledge of children's needs and interests skilfully to plan meaningful and engaging learning experiences, which support children's exploration and curiosity. Regular review of planning ensures that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Group time experiences support children to develop an understanding of their rights and the wellbeing indicators, and staff should now build on this to further develop children's understanding through regular curricular experiences.
- Effective delivery of the curriculum supports most children to progress well in their learning across all curricular areas.
- Transitions are very well planned to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning. Staff work with families to gather information about children's learning at home and use this to plan effectively for children's needs and interests.
- As part of transition arrangements, nursery and primary staff discuss a range of information, including detailed tracking information and children's learning journals, which supports P1 teachers to plan how to build effectively on children's previous learning, and support progression.

- Staff know the community well and are beginning to develop community partnerships to enhance children's learning experiences.
- Parents find the range of family learning activities across the year very useful to support their children's learning at home. Family learning opportunities have been thoughtfully developed with alternative timings, to increase parental attendance.
- Children are developing skills for life which includes opportunities to work together to grow vegetables in the garden and use these to prepare and cook for snack.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Children aged two years are supported by staff who are attuned to children's individual needs, interests and motivations, and as a result, all children feel valued, loved and secure.
- Staff regularly use national research and local authority guidance to reflect, plan and evaluate spaces, experiences and interactions for children aged two years. Well-designed outdoor and indoor spaces support children to follow their own curiosity.
- Positive relationships are a key strength between all staff, children and families as they work together to 'support, succeed and shine'.
- All children are comfortable approaching staff due to the nurturing and reciprocal relationships which exist, and staff foster a calm, purposeful environment through sensitive and respectful interactions with children and each other.
- Most staff use a range of strategies very well to support children's early language and communication development.
- Almost all children are curious and inquisitive, demonstrating high levels of engagement in their play.
- Staff plan a suitable balance of child-initiated, adult initiated and adult-directed experiences which are relevant and engaging and take account of and extend children's interests well.
- Children are learning and talking about their rights through planned group times and at nursery with their key worker.
- Nursery staff and children demonstrate the values of Creativity, Ambition, Respect and Equality (CARE), which strongly underpin the ethos across the whole school and early years setting.
- Staff use digital technologies very well to support children's learning across the curriculum, which includes children's use of educational games or programmes on the interactive whiteboard, cameras, torches and programmable toys.
- Senior staff help to ensure consistency when assessing children's progress, through shared and agreed standards about children's learning in journals.
- Parents access children's learning journals regularly and find the information very useful in helping them to understand their child's progress in learning.
- Staff use robust tracking and monitoring approaches well to identify and address potential barriers to children's learning and plan timely interventions, monitoring children's progress carefully. As a result, almost all children are making positive progress across all learning.
- Senior leaders analyse information about children's progress regularly to identify future areas of improvement across learning and teaching approaches, and act on these accordingly.

Wellbeing, inclusion and equality

- Children and their families have a very strong sense of belonging to the nursery community, which is underpinned by the very positive, respectful and trusting relationships that are central to the work of the setting.
- Children feel settled and happy by the warm and inclusive ethos of the playroom and are supported by staff who know them very well and who are attuned to their individual needs, valuing each child as an individual with their own unique personality
- Staff support children very well to recognise, name and manage their feelings, providing children with strategies they can use to manage strong emotions. As a result, children regulate their behaviour very well and there is a respectful and tolerant ethos across the setting.
- Staff ensure that the outdoor space is well used to enable children to access fresh air and develop their physical skills using large equipment and resources.
- Most children are very confident with nursery routines and are developing their independence well, as they develop self-help skills as they serve their own food and clear away their dishes.

- Staff are very aware of all children's individual needs and plan collaboratively with staff and partners to reduce potential barriers to learning and development, and support children's progress.
- Staff implement effective interventions which are influenced through the robust professional dialogue, planning, assessment, and tracking and monitoring approaches that exist. They promote inclusion throughout their daily interactions, conversations and practice.
- Senior leaders are highly skilled in supporting staff to ensure all children and families receive the right support at the right time from the right person. As a result, all children's individual needs are met consistently well.
- All children with additional support needs have their needs met very well through effective partnership working with families and multi-agency partners. Staff share approaches and strategies with families, including strategies to support children's early communication. This results in children receiving consistent care and support from all caregivers.
- Robust and relevant planning approaches ensures all children with additional support needs are making very good progress.
- Trusting relationships between families and senior leaders result in children and families benefiting from an inclusive ethos where everyone is valued.
- All staff promote the importance of children attending the setting regularly with families, implementing bespoke strategies to provide support. As a result, the overall attendance average has increased.
- Staff are very aware of the socio-economic and cultural context in which children live, and families view the nursery as a safe place where they can comfortably share concerns and seek help if they require it. Staff work together with families very well to ensure all children are included.

Key activity to date has included the following:

- The Head Teacher has led a whole staff development session to ensure full understanding of the inspection findings, including strengths and identified areas for improvement.
- A draft curriculum rationale has been developed with children and staff, and the team are currently seeking the views of families to further inform this development.
- Local community links have been established to further develop children's learning experiences, including links with local supermarkets and Dundee train station.
- The team have sought the views of families to inform and support a planned programme of Family Learning for session 2026/27

Ballumbie Early Years Centre Priorities

- In collaboration with children, families and staff, the team should now develop and create a curriculum rationale that will help to easily share the design and purpose of the curriculum.
- Staff should build on existing positive approaches to provide children with regular, meaningful opportunities within the local community.
- Staff should now provide a wider range of relevant experiences that will help develop children's skills for life and learning.
- To support inclusive practice, staff should now consider how to develop children's communication and language further through the visual environment.
- Staff should now consider capturing children's voice and next steps when planning and evaluating their play and learning.
- Staff should continue to review the resources and provocations on offer to ensure open-ended challenge is provided for all children.

Full details of the Summary of Inspection Findings are available at:

[Ballumbie Primary School summarised inspection findings, Dundee City Council 17/03/26](#)
[Ballumbie Early Years summarised inspection findings, Dundee City Council 17/03/26](#)

Explanation of terms of quantity

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

All	100%
Almost all	91-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Audrey May
Executive Director

Paul Fleming
Chief Education Officer

Signed



Audrey May, Executive Director of Children and Families Service

Paul Fleming, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)

APPENDIX 3



17 March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2026, a team of HM Inspectors of Education visited Ballumbie Primary School and Ballumbie 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.

- Children across the school and nursery are polite and eager to learn. They have a strong sense of belonging, are proud of their achievements and demonstrate the shared values.
- Lead by the effective headteacher, staff work well as a team. They are keen to develop their individual and collective skills to help improve outcomes for children.
- The approaches staff take to supporting children's wellbeing in the school and nursery. Wellbeing is central to the work of the school. Children learn within a highly inclusive environment allowing them to 'support, succeed and shine' in line with the shared vision.
- Staff in the nursery have developed well-considered and calming environments both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are curious, creative and inquisitive and engage purposefully in play experiences.

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

- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure these are of a consistent high-quality across the school.
- Staff in the school and nursery should work together to ensure children experience a broad and relevant curriculum. In doing so, they should support children to develop skills and knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
- All staff in the school should continue to develop approaches to involve all children in leadership and decision making. They should support children to understand how their views improve the work of the school.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 HMIE's evaluations for Ballumbie Primary School and Early Years Centre

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	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	

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using three quality indicators from the [Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Curriculum	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	very good

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at:

<https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/find-an-inspection-report/details/?id=1543>

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.

Simon Gallon
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland

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