

# Summarised inspection findings

**Baldernock Primary School**

East Dunbartonshire Council

17 March 2020

## Key contextual information

Baldernock Primary School is a non-denominational school which serves the communities of Baldernock, Balmore and Torrance. The current roll of the school is 50 children.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Parents, partners, children and staff have agreed recently the vision, values and aims of the school through a successful consultation process. The school's vision statement reflects the values of working together, respecting others and pursuing excellence. These values underpin positive relationships and support children's work in school very effectively. The headteacher and staff create a strong awareness of these values across the school. These serve as a focus to develop the school's ambition for its children. As planned, the headteacher and staff should continue to embed rights based learning across the curriculum, to develop further children's understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRC) and how it informs their learning.
- The headteacher is very well respected in the community. She has a clear focus on the wellbeing of the children and this underpins her relationships with parents, staff and children. The leadership team communicate very effectively the school's agreed vision. The headteacher encourages close, collegiate working and highly-effective ongoing professional development with staff. As a result of this, staff are very motivated. They work well together to ensure continuous school improvement. Along with the principal teacher, the headteacher is highly visible in supporting staff in class, working very well with groups and individual children, to enrich the learning experiences. All of this activity, is helping and enabling staff to meet children's needs and inform their approaches to children's learning.
- All staff work very well together and are committed to bringing about improvement to the school. The school improvement planning focuses on agreed areas for development and matches well with the school's ambition. Staff, parents and children are becoming more involved in setting school priorities. Together, they are developing further ways to contribute appropriately to school improvement processes and regular evaluation of the school's work.
- Teachers take on important leadership roles which are successfully linked to the school improvement plan. New members of staff are encouraged to take on distributed leadership roles across the school, for example, in autism support and outdoor learning. Teachers are implementing learning from professional learning activities they have undertaken well to improve pedagogy across the school. They work very effectively as a team to share professional learning and expertise. They should continue further to build whole school approaches to learning and teaching, including a digital learning strategy, to ensure consistency in children's progress.

- Children discuss the school improvement planning priorities regularly at school assembly. They are increasingly involved in taking roles and responsibilities across the school. Children in each of the multi-stage classrooms are making use of 'How Good Is OUR School?' (HGIOS?) to support their role in school self-evaluation. They are developing leadership skills and learning to work cooperatively together. Children are developing responsibility and achieving success through their leadership in school through various ways. They take responsibility as school leaders as house captains, junior road safety officers and as numeracy and playground buddies. Children contribute effectively to aspects of school life in these leadership roles.
- The senior leadership team has an established annual calendar of quality assurance activities which support teachers to improve both the quality of children's work and professional practice in learning, teaching and assessment. The senior leadership team review appropriately teachers' planning and sample children's work. The headteacher and the small staff team plan well together on a monthly basis. This helps and allows the leadership team to support and challenge staff at the planning stage, which supports children's progress and identifies their next steps in learning. The leadership team work well with staff to bring about raised expectations and attainment through regular professional dialogue.
- The headteacher and staff continue to build effective partnerships and relationships with parents to support children across the school. The leadership team has broadened the ways in which staff consult with parents and partners.
- Parents are being involved in school improvement through, for example, a recent consultation on homework policy. The leadership team should continue to develop further a consistent approach to communication which supports children, parents and partners to continue to support the school in its self-evaluation and continuous improvement processes. Parents comment favourably on the distinct context of the school and what it offers their children.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships across the school are caring and positive between staff and children and amongst children. The school values of working together, respecting others and pursuing excellence support a safe, secure and welcoming environment for children to learn. Staff and children continue to develop successfully an understanding of children's rights through an accreditation scheme. Almost all children work well together and their behaviour is very good in and out of the classroom.
- Children enjoy their lessons in class and outdoors and respond positively to well-planned and organised learning experiences. In most lessons, staff plan learners' experiences well to meet children's needs. Almost all teachers provide clear instructions. They explain tasks well. Staff and children participate enthusiastically in a range of activities to develop children's health and wellbeing.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. There are positive examples of learning and teaching and staff continue to develop ways of working together to provide quality-learning experiences. Teachers use differentiation well, showing awareness of different levels of individual need within multi-stage classes. Most children are involved in planning learning experiences. Teachers share the purpose of learning with the children and discuss and agree with them how the learning will be successful. Children articulate and describe effectively their learning experiences. Teachers develop questioning well in most classes and children engage and interact positively with teachers. There is scope for children to become more aware of the skills they are developing and how to improve their work. Staff have made a good start to developing children's skills in leading their own learning.
- Children use digital technology well across the school to enhance their learning. They are developing effectively their skills in using laptop computers and digital devices which support and enhance their learning in a range of curricular areas, across the school. Teachers use new resources well in technology and educational software to support children's learning.
- Teachers are engaging in moderation activities with one another to develop their understanding and professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence levels level in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use the National Benchmarks and a variety of assessments, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments to support their professional judgements of children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. The headteacher gathers this data to monitor children's progress in learning. As result of this, teachers are meeting the needs of the children well and raising attainment. Across the school, staff plan effectively to meet the needs of all the children. Teachers are positive about their approaches to planning and are developing learning experiences which are targeted more effectively at the children. As a result of this, support staff are deployed effectively to assist individual children as well as groups and specific classes.

- Across the school, learning and assessment strategies support children's learning to both check children's understanding and identify their progress in learning. As a result, teachers ensure that breadth and challenge are set at the appropriate level for the children. Teachers use formative and summative assessment well and with consistency across the school. The leadership team should develop further opportunities for children to assess their own work and that of others at their stage, to develop further their understanding.
- Teaching staff track children's progress daily in class to ensure this informs teaching and learning. The leadership team use an established tracking system which informs the pace of learning and monitors effectively children's progress. As a result, staff have an overview of the children's progress across the school which helps them plan appropriate interventions and next steps for individual children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Effective curricular pathways are in place for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These meet the needs of children and support their progress in learning. The school uses frameworks provided by the local authority and has adapted them to take account of the local context. The curriculum reflects the school's vision, values and aims. Staff should continue to develop a curriculum rationale that emphasises further the school context and the aspirations of the community it serves.
- Teachers review the curriculum effectively and continue to seek examples of good practice from outwith the school, including when working with external partners. Further opportunities to explore 'real life' contexts should be developed. These should be more aligned with the 'Careers Education Standard' to help staff build a richer curriculum and incorporate more creativity within the curriculum. For example, developing appropriate skills and relating activities to real-life contexts.
- Senior leaders should review the school's approach to interdisciplinary learning to ensure children receive a broad range of experiences across multi-composite classes.
- The school currently provides two hours of high-quality physical education for all children.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school has established effective collaborative working with the Parent Council and wider parent body to engage parents in the work of the school. The school consults regularly with parents and welcomes their views on the life and work of the school. For example, a recent parent consultation has resulted in an innovative approach to homework. Parents are also evaluating the quality of partnership working between home and school to support children's learning. As a result, parents engage further in drop-in sessions in order to meet their needs and address more effectively parent priorities.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The school has a well-developed culture of collaborative working to promote health and wellbeing. Under the leadership of the headteacher, staff have prioritised the social and emotional wellbeing of children as a fundamental precursor to them being able to learn effectively. As a result, children feel valued, safe and happy in their school. All stakeholders are very positive about the strong sense of community which they see as characteristic of the school. The headteacher is working well with staff to extend their awareness of the children's rights legislation that underpins the national approach to health and wellbeing. As a result, senior leaders and teachers have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory duties.
- The headteacher has a strategic approach to developing health and wellbeing for children and staff. This includes engaging staff in regular professional learning, for example, around the local authority 'compassionate, connected community' initiative. Staff undertake professional learning and this underpins the inclusive approach staff are taking in their newly developed Promoting Positive Relationships Policy. The school is at the point of engaging parents and children in developing and agreeing this policy for implementation. The pupil council has already identified health and wellbeing as a priority for its work in the current session. They are taking this work forward supported by the use of, (HGIOS?). Children are developing confidence and skills in relation to citizenship as a result of increasing engagement with school improvement priorities. As a result of this, children are more fully involved with school activities, participate in leadership roles and are developing a wide range of skills.
- All children are familiar with the wellbeing indicators and can discuss them in relation to their everyday experiences of school and use them to evaluate their wellbeing. Teachers use these, as required, in dialogue with children to provide a more detailed analysis of wellbeing needs and to identify potential concerns. Staff know all children and families very well. Robust procedures are in place to identify children's learning needs as they arise and address them successfully. Children and parents agree on strategies to address any barriers to learning. This may include additional support staff implementing particular interventions or seeking advice from the senior leadership team. These are reviewed regularly and their impact evaluated to ensure that children make very good progress in their learning.

Staff use the immediate environment and local community effectively to deliver a range of creative approaches to support the social and emotional wellbeing of all children. Staff are strongly committed to using outdoor education and outdoor learning to underpin the whole-school approach to health and wellbeing. Daily physical activity, such as walking and running, provide stimulating and supportive contexts in which children can understand and improve their sense of wellbeing. These provide an effective foundation to 'getting it right for

every child'. As a result, most children are fit and active across the school. They appreciate and understand, about the importance of health and wellbeing.

- The school has relevant policies that take good account of guidance on targeted support from East Dunbartonshire Council. Senior leaders monitor effectively the work of the school. In doing so they provide effective feedback to ensure children's needs are being met. The staff 'Pupil Support Group' carefully considers appropriate interventions and designs individualised support programmes where needed. Parents and children agree on helpful long-term and short-term targets and termly evaluations.
- The school is meeting the main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 to ensure access to drinking water throughout the day, protect the identity of those entitled to a free school meal and promote the school meal service to parents and children.
- The nutritional analysis of the three-week menu cycle shows that there is further work to be done to comply fully with the regulations.
- The school provides religious and moral education (RME) and religious observation (RO) which is in line with national advice. The school has a planned programme of assemblies which supports children to celebrate the school values and encourages children to reflect on social and global issues. Children plan and lead acts of RO, as part of a larger planned programme. This supports them to consider their own experiences in light of deeper questions about meaning, value and purpose in life.
- Senior leaders and staff are aware of the need to ensure all children have a developed understanding of diversity and equality. There are appropriate approaches planned through learning experiences in RME and social subjects. A few children have spoken to others, for example at assemblies, about particular barriers they experience and this supports a greater appreciation of the difficulties they face in class. Representatives from different cultures and religious groups meet with children as part of a visiting programme and talk about their life experiences. The school should continue, as planned, to explore ways to embed learning about diversity and equality across all areas of the curriculum.
- The headteacher understands the fundamental role played by children's rights in education and rightly makes this the lens through which staff and stakeholders view health and wellbeing. Across the school, children have a good awareness of rights and recognise how they inform the values, vision and aims of the school. The school has achieved a bronze Rights Respecting Schools award and staff plan to develop further the role of children's rights to embed it fully within the school.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

It is important to note that the number of children in cohorts is variable and in some stages fewer than ten. Consequently, overall statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individuals. Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in their learning.

### Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is very good.

### Listening and talking

- Almost all children are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all listen well to instructions and speak clearly about their learning. They interact well with their teachers and are articulate and expressive in their conversations. Children listen well to teachers but a few are still learning to listen well to each other. Across the school, almost all take turns when speaking to each other and extend and counter the conversations they have with other children. At first and second levels, children are articulate and express ideas and information well. They present information effectively through various assembly contributions and as pupil council members and house captains. Children demonstrate strong skills in talking and listening during their participation in organised debates at the associated secondary school.

### Reading

- Almost all children are making very good progress in reading. At early level, children are developing effectively their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns and building up their vocabulary through class activities. At first level, children read well and are aware of fluency and expression when reading aloud. They name several popular children's authors and explain why they enjoy a particular text. Children recount their favourite passages from and discuss their reaction to texts. They are aware of genre and discuss different kinds of books and texts and identify those which are non-fiction. At second level, children read well with fluency and expression when they read aloud. They comment on the books they are reading both in school and at home and identify the main features. Almost all children name a number of authors and their works. They identify the genre to which they belong. Almost all children are aware of the available texts in their classroom. A few children would value having more choice of texts in their classroom to further their reading.

### Writing

- Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in writing. At early level, children are exploring ways to convey information in imaginative and real contexts. At first level, children are writing stories which they have planned and prepared around a number of themes. Children work well in pairs and write interesting and detailed stories in various contexts with support and structure from the teacher. At second level, almost all children are writing appropriately and experiencing writing for different purposes. Most children are aware

of different kinds of writing and write imaginative, instructional and personal stories, as well as persuasive letters. Children can apply their writing skills with confidence. The presentation of children's work is good across the school and teachers provide positive and constructive feedback to children on their writing with a degree of consistency. The school displays high-quality children's written work around the school.

### **Attainment in numeracy**

- Overall, children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children at early level, and all at first and second levels, attain or exceed national expectations.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, children estimate the amount of items in a group or visual representation. They count with confidence and add and subtract up to ten. They understand and use time vocabulary in relation to daily routines and events. Children use coins up to the value of 10p and weigh objects. Children use relative terms with confidence such as longer, longest, heavier, more, less and use building blocks to make simple three-dimensional objects. At first level, children demonstrate good skills in interpreting questions, explaining their choice of mathematical strategies, linking mathematical concepts and using algebraic reasoning. They have a sound knowledge of key number facts and are developing fluency in their use of mental processes. Children use mathematical vocabulary accurately and apply creative solutions to problems involving the four basic operations with whole numbers up to and including three digits. They calculate correctly change from £20 in pounds and pence. Children understand fractions, decimals and percentages and are confident in calculating equivalences. They know patterns and sequences involving numbers, shapes, pictures and objects. At second level, children apply their skills in numeracy and mathematics with confidence. They demonstrate mental agility in performing basic number operations and in more complex calculations. They are confident in place value, estimating, rounding and problem solving. Children can justify why they use a particular process and discuss and evaluate these with peers and staff. They value working with 'maths buddies', which supports their understanding of mathematical thinking. Children link effectively mathematical concepts. They can calculate percentage discount accurately using sums of money and are confident in calculating time using 12 and 24-hour notations.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, children recognise and can name basic shapes. At first level, children describe with accuracy, the properties of a range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using appropriate vocabulary. At second level, children can discuss the main features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using appropriate terminology correctly, and can calculate the area of basic triangular and rectangular shapes. They are less confident in understanding the properties of a circle. All children describe and measure accurately a variety of angles and could use compass points to direct movement.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children use simple charts, displays or menus to find information and can draw simple diagrams to record information. At first level, children apply their learning on data handling effectively to their learning in other areas of the curriculum, for example, in quantifying and comparing information about Viking populations, ships and journeys. They design with accuracy information displays for whole-school surveys, for example on children's favourite playtime games and activities. At second level, children represent and interpret information from bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts. They would benefit from using a wider range of data handling, for example Venn and Carroll diagrams.

- While children are aware of the value of mathematics and numeracy in relation to some specific areas of work, they would benefit from developing a wider appreciation of the applications of mathematics in everyday life.

### **Attainment over time**

- Overall, children make very good progress over time. They maintain high levels of attainment over time. Data provided by the school for the past four years is accurate and shows that overall, almost all children achieved the expected national standard in literacy and numeracy during this period.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Staff record children's participation in a broad range of activities to ensure no child misses out on opportunities for achievement. They also record what children are doing outside of school and encourage children to take part in a variety of different activities to broaden their learning experiences.
- Children are achieving well across a range of contexts. Their participation in after-school clubs and at lunchtime, including, for example, music, dance, photography, cycling, walking, tennis and chess, demonstrates their enthusiasm and the valuable skills they have achieved. Children in P6 and P7 lead a number of lunchtime clubs. This is currently being extended to children in P4 and P5. As a result, children are growing in confidence and display leadership and strong communication skills. Active schools have seen a steady increase in participation over the past three years so that now all children participate in some activity. Along with their participation in house and committees meetings on Friday afternoons, children plan and present RO events, which support all children to develop their interests, confidence and skills. They contribute as effective members of the community. The leadership team should extend their approaches to tracking or recording children's wider achievement making children aware of skills and link these skills to the 'Career Education Standard.'

### **Equity for all learners**

- The leadership team and staff make use of the Pupil Equity Fund to support the expansion of digital hardware through the supply of tablet computers. This approach targets children with specific needs and helps all children to develop skills in numeracy and raise attainment.
- The school has robust attendance procedures and these are effective in ensuring that children are in school. There have been no incidents of exclusion in recent years.

## School Empowerment

### ■ Developing staff autonomy and aspects of leadership

- The leadership team is developing a culture of trust and autonomy to encourage teachers to adopt new approaches, take measured risks and develop creativity and innovation across the system. This approach to empowerment is growing effectively where staff work closely together and have developed a clear whole school vision.
- Staff members lead development work in areas such as autism and outdoor learning. This further involves delivering awareness-raising sessions to other members of the staff team and keeping them informed of professional developments in this area.
- The leadership team currently supports these initiatives through financing related professional development opportunities for staff. They support a degree of management time, through class cover arrangements, for staff to take forward these remits and provide protected time within working time agreements to facilitate their roles in school. Staff involved are encouraged to produce strategic plans and ideas to enhance the learning throughout the school. Staff discuss these and where appropriate, implement where possible.
- The leadership team is developing further inclusive practices across the school such as 'compassionate and connected community' and related inclusion training. Staff are encouraged to engage with relevant training through the local authority's continuing professional development catalogue and access other appropriate opportunities. These opportunities enhance staff ownership and leadership capacity.
- Children benefit from these initiatives undertaken across the school and the raised level of expertise offers exciting possibilities of new approaches in the curriculum. Teachers are developing awareness of a greater understanding of child development and individual needs.

## 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%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.