

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **DARVEL PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT**

#### **Report by the Depute Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer** **Economy and Skills**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report presents the findings of a report by Education Scotland: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) on their inspection of Darvel Primary School (short inspection model).

#### **BACKGROUND**

#### **AIMS OF INSPECTION**

2. The powers of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) to inspect education establishments and services for children are set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, section 66. HMIE is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. As an Inspectorate, it contributes towards achieving the Government's overall purpose and its strategic objectives of creating a smarter, healthier, wealthier and fairer, greener and safer and stronger Scotland.
3. Inspections and reviews are designed 'to improve outcomes for all Scotland's learners'. This is achieved through:
  - Providing independent assurance and accountability to the users of education services regarding the quality of provision and outcomes achieved;
  - Providing a solid base of evidence drawn from professional evaluations of 'front line' practice' to inform national policy development on education and children's issues; and the
  - Promotion and adoption of effective practice and assisting providers to increase their capability to self-evaluate and drive their own improvement.
4. Each year HMIE inspect and report on the quality of education in a sample of primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, community learning and development services, colleges and residential educational provision. In addition, shared inspections are undertaken jointly by HMIE and the Care Inspectorate in a sample of early learning and childcare settings.
5. Through its inspections, HMIE aims to provide assurance to stakeholders. It also aims to promote improvement and successful innovation to enhance learners' experiences and achievements. Inspections also contribute to National Performance Framework (NPF) reporting.

6. From August 2016, a range of new inspection models were introduced to suit particular circumstances and contexts. This enables inspectors to respond with greater agility and flexibility as key educational policies and priorities develop. The inspection models introduced in a phased approach from August 2016 are:
  - Full inspection model
  - Short inspection model
  - Localised thematic model
  - Neighbourhood model
7. These inspection models will use the new Quality Indicators included in *How Good is Our School?* (4th edition) (HGIOS4) which was published in September 2015. It is expected that schools are already using these indicators for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The HGIOS4 Quality Indicators to be evaluated on the six-point scale in full school inspections have been re-focused to align with the new National Improvement Framework developed with Scottish Government, partners and stakeholders across the education system. They are:
  - 1.3 Leadership of Change
  - 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
  - 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement
  - 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

These Quality Indicators are reported on using the six point scale; *excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, weak and unsatisfactory*. The first three of these QIs will feed directly into the evidence base for the National Improvement Framework. In addition, inspections will incorporate themes from other QIs to ensure evidence continues to be captured to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development.

8. These themes will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant. From August 2016, the Learning Pathways theme from QI 2.2 Curriculum will be included and will refer to QI 2.7 Partnerships in evaluating the impact of parental engagement. A continuing focus on safeguarding will be part of every inspection. A further QI is negotiated with the school. This will enable school staff and inspectors to focus on a particularly challenging issue or new initiative with the aim of bringing about improvement through professional dialogue. This QI will not be evaluated on the six-point scale. In inspections of nursery classes and early learning and childcare centres, the equivalent QIs from *How good is our early learning and childcare?* will be used

## **INSPECTION PROCESS**

9. Inspections are carried out by a team of Inspectors, Associate Assessors (AA), a Lay Member (LM) working for Education Scotland and where there is an early years setting, an inspector from the Care Inspectorate will be part of the team. In very small schools, one HMI will inspect the school. Schools and early childhood centres are notified three weeks before the inspection is due to take place.
10. Inspectors will undertake a range of activities over the course of the inspection. The programme of activities will be informed by the “areas for focused attention”. It involves class visits (including the nursery class or early childhood

centre where there is one), meetings with staff and children, and reading key documentation. Some members of the team, such as the Lay Member and Health and Nutrition Inspector are in the school at different times in the course of the week.

11. Inspectors also take the opportunity to speak to Parent Council Chairperson, parents and staff as a follow up to the questionnaires that are distributed before the inspection. At the end of the inspection week, inspectors meet with the Head Teacher (and Senior Management Team where there is one) and the Strategic Education Group Manager to share their findings using the three key questions listed above as the basis for dialogue. They share their evaluations of the four quality indicators.
12. Following the inspection, a letter for parents is published on the Education Scotland website and the Care Inspectorate website where there is an early years setting and sent electronically to the education authority and the chairperson of the Parent Council. Where necessary, the school and early childhood centre, with support from the education authority will amend its improvement plan to bring about improvements that the letter says is needed. In some cases HMIE will carry out a continued engagement visit to support staff in making improvements or gather information about good practice.

## **DARVEL PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT**

13. Darvel Primary School was inspected during March 2017 with inspectors using the short inspection model. The key features of the short visit inspection model differ to the full model as follows:
  - The team is composed of fewer inspectors (with the exception of small establishments where the team would have been small with a full inspection model)
  - Inspectors will spend less time in school (a total of two days), normally from Monday lunchtime to Wednesday lunchtime for a primary school and Tuesday lunchtime to Thursday lunchtime for a secondary school.
  - There will be a focus on two quality indicators (QIs)
    - 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
    - 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement (or securing children's progress in the early years sector)

Inspectors will make evaluations of these QIs using the six-point scale.

The report to parents and carers following the inspection in the form of a short letter was issued on the 23rd May 2017. The letter highlights strengths and aspects for development and includes a table indicating the QI grades against the six-point scale. Inspection evidence gathered during the inspection process is also made available on the Education Scotland website in a document called the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF).

14. This inspection found the following strengths in the school's work:
  - Polite courteous children who are caring and supportive of each other.
  - Children who are increasingly taking responsibility for aspects of school life.
  - The impact of the headteacher in building a school community.

15. The inspection also highlighted areas where continued improvement could be made:
- Continue to develop self-evaluation so that children can achieve as well as they can.
  - Improve staff skills in analysing and interpreting a range of data to support children's progress more effectively.
  - Develop a clear plan to take forward improvements in literacy.
16. Education Scotland's evaluations for Darvel Primary School were as follows:
- *Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement - good*
  - *Raising attainment and achievement - satisfactory*

## **KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement**

17. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation across the school. Staff now recognise that effective self-evaluation is essential to achieving the goal of being an improving school.
18. Since taking up her post over a year ago the headteacher has won the respect of staff, parents and children alike. She has introduced a range of procedures which are supporting self-evaluation for self-improvement. These procedures are at the early stages and have not had time to impact fully. The headteacher clearly knows what the school needs to do to improve.
19. The use of self-evaluation is becoming more prevalent within the school. The results of self-evaluation are used well to identify target groups of children and determine appropriate resources to support these groups and raise their attainment. The school should continue with its plans to develop this further and identify appropriate interventions, including improving pedagogy and learning experiences for children.
20. Staff are beginning to compare school performance against national benchmarks and using their evaluations to identify priorities for school improvement. They are now using 'How good is our school? (4th edition)' to benchmark their performance against this framework. This has resulted in an appropriate set of School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities. Working groups within the school monitor how these developments are progressing. There is scope to develop this further with success being measured, for example against the impact on children and their attainment. While stakeholders' views are sought, there remains scope to involve children, parents and partners further in shaping school improvement.
21. Overall, there is an appropriate range of assessments taking place within the school. There is sufficient evidence to track children's progress across literacy and numeracy. The school should build on this to track progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff track individual children's participation in out of school activities and their achievements. Staff skills in interrogating and analysing this

data need to be further developed. This session, moderation discussions have been taking place with individual teachers as part of the quality assurance procedures. While this is a positive move there is scope to collate the information from these meetings to identify strengths, trends and aspects for improvement. This should be shared with staff collectively. Staff should agree how best to take this forward and how to share best practice.

22. There is good practice in Darvel Primary School. This practice needs to be shared. There are plans for this to happen. Staff should visit each other's classes with a clear focus on what to observe. This should be identified through lesson observations by senior leaders. There is scope to focus lesson observations better to support the development of consistency high-quality learning and teaching across the school.
23. There is a professional review and development (PRD) process within the school. It uses the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards as a focus. The PRD process is not linked appropriately enough to the development needs of staff which have been identified through self-evaluation. The senior leadership team are in the process of re-establishing this process which should be linked to staff needs and taking forward SIP priorities.
24. Pupil voice is improving across the school. Initiatives such as 'circle assemblies' enable children to work collaboratively to suggest improvements to school life such as improved road safety. The Junior Road Safety Officers lead the 'Be Bright Be Seen' initiative which has improved the safety of children as they travel to and from school.
25. Over recent years staff, through self-evaluation, had identified the development of numeracy as a key aspect for improvement. This is being developed systematically and has had an initial positive result in improving children's attainment, enhancing learning experiences and developing teaching approaches.

### **Raising Attainment and Achievement**

26. Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Based on data provided by the school from June 2016, the majority of children by the end of Primary 1 achieved early level for reading and writing and most children achieved early level for listening and talking and mathematics and numeracy. By the end of Primary 4, the majority of children achieved first level for reading, listening and talking and mathematics and numeracy. Less than half of the children achieved first level for writing. By the end of Primary 7, the majority of pupils achieved second level in reading and listening and talking, less than half of the pupils achieved second level in writing and most pupils achieved second level in mathematics and numeracy. Staff are not yet tracking cohorts of children across time.
27. There is scope for raising children's attainment across the school. Attainment data collected for this school session continues to identify this. The school now needs to track more robustly the progress of attainment of different groups of learners to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

28. Across the school, staff are developing their procedures to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The school should now provide clear strategic direction for the development of literacy across the school and continue with their development of a progressive pathway for mathematics and numeracy with a stronger focus on skills progression and relevant contexts for learning. The accuracy and presentation of written work in mathematics and numeracy was variable across all classes.
29. Most children listen well during lessons to staff. They talk confidently in social groupings and in most cases, children could speak confidently with adults including visitors. Children's skills in listening to, responding to and building on the ideas of their peers is limited. Teachers require to develop listening and talking skills in a coherent and progressive manner. The school should now develop a progressive and consistent approach to this across the school. Children's use of the language of learning is limited. In both focus groups at P4 and P7, almost all children found it difficult to articulate what they needed to do to improve their learning and their work. Children are unable to identify that listening and talking are core elements of learning in literacy.
30. Overall, most children can read well and are interested in reading. The majority can name favourite authors. Core schemes are supplemented by other resources, for example, novels which support the widening of children's skills and maintain enjoyment. Children have the opportunity to choose a book from the class library. Younger children successfully use a number of strategies to decode words using an active approach. Children in P4 and P7 were able to read texts, though some lacked expression and had difficulty decoding more complicated and unseen words. Children in P7 were constructing literal, evaluative and inferential questions and produced book reviews based on their personal book choice. The majority of children in P4 are able to find appropriate information from texts. The majority P7 children were able to answer a range of questions from their text and identify the importance of character in texts.
31. Children benefit from a variety of strategies to improve the quality of their writing. The majority of children spell common words accurately. Children in P1 have made a positive start to writing and are developing confidence to write purposefully with an appropriate level of independence. Children in P4 use note taking to support their writing. Children in P7 are beginning to write at length across a variety of aspects of genre. Presentation of work across the school is variable in quality. In the best examples, children are creating interesting characters and showing descriptive detail. The use of success criteria matched to Curriculum for Excellence levels is beginning to support children in developing their skills progressively. Overall the teaching of writing requires a fresh focus to ensure a consistent approach across the school with skills being taught developmentally from P1 to P7. Sampling children's jotters highlights variations in expectations and standards. Teachers should give better quality feedback to help children improve their writing.
32. Learning experiences in mathematics and numeracy are too reliant on published resources and are not planned across a range of relevant and meaningful contexts. Opportunities for developing mathematics and numeracy across the

curriculum need to be developed across all stages. There is a need for the school to ensure all areas of mathematics and numeracy are being planned for and revisited regularly. A mathematics lunchtime club had been created to support Primary 7 children in developing opportunities to engage in a range of activities. Real life contexts to develop mathematics and numeracy skills are being explored within this club.

33. Most children in Primary 4 and Primary 7, are not confident in identifying and discussing the different ways in which data can be presented and what their experiences of this are. The school should plan for children to have regular opportunities to collect, organise and display data in a variety of ways within a range of meaningful contexts, including through the use of digital technologies.
34. Children do not have enough opportunities to use a range of strategies to solve problems linked to a variety of contexts. Opportunities should be developed that allow children to apply their knowledge and skills that are not dependent on specific resources. This would also allow children to consolidate and apply their learning. Children are unaware of problem solving strategies to help them find solutions.
35. The school was unable to provide attainment figures in literacy and numeracy from previous years and so was unable to identify any trends in performance. The school is now beginning to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy over time based on teacher's professional judgement. The school recognises that staff are not yet confident in assessing children's progress within and across Curriculum for Excellence levels. The work they are undertaking in developing progression pathways for literacy and numeracy will assist them in assessing and tracking progress. The school should now continue to develop a robust tracking system to ensure continuity and appropriate progress for children in their learning.
36. Moderation has taken place across cluster schools for listening and talking, numeracy and writing. The senior leadership team and staff acknowledge that there is a need to review moderation activities across the school to ensure that teachers have an agreed and shared standard to support assessment judgements. This will ensure children are making appropriate progress across the curriculum.
37. Children are given a range of opportunities to exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. House captains and vice-captains in P7 exercise responsibility across the school as buddies and monitors. House captains help organise and assist with the school's circle assemblies where all children contribute their views on a range of aspects of school life. The school uses the circle assembly system well to develop aspects of its work, for example, to gain accreditation as a dyslexia friendly school.
38. Junior Road Safety Officers make a positive contribution to the school and the local community and worked with local police on an initiative to curb speeding in the town. The school successfully promotes the importance of achievements and the contribution these make to individuals and the whole school community. Children contribute to the wider community through a range of out-of-school

visits. They learn about the world of work from a range of visitors from the community, including local businesses and further education. Across the school, children take great pride representing their school in sports festivals, music and drama performances and in community events.

39. Almost all children are confident and contribute well to discussions around decision making and generating ideas for improvements in the school. Children can talk well about their achievements and participation. The school should now explicitly link skills children are learning and how these would be useful in different situations such as the workplace.
40. Staff know and monitor those children who are at risk of missing out and guide individuals toward suitable activities. This could be developed further to explore the potential barriers to participation. This approach could also capture the skills children are acquiring through their interests and achievements and how this is taken account of in planning learning.
41. The school monitors participation in after-school and out-of-school activities and intervenes to identify barriers to participation and supports individual children and families to overcome these. The school is aware of children and families facing financial hardship and ensure that cost is not a barrier to all children being able to participate in school trips and fund raising events like Red Nose Day.
42. The headteacher uses a range of data including SIMD to identify children experiencing disadvantage who are not progressing as well as expected and to intervene appropriately. There is scope for the school to improve how it uses the range of available data. The effectiveness of subsequent interventions should be monitored and tracked to ensure improvements in the attainment of identified groups of children, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

### **Next Steps**

43. Inspectors are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Ayrshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools. The letter to parents is appended to the report for members' reference.
44. The School Improvement Plan sets out in detail the actions which will be taken in order to address the areas where continued improvement has been highlighted.
45. The Strategic Education Group Manager will work with and support the school in achieving improvement in the highlighted areas and will provide regular reports to the Head of Education.

## **PARENTS AND CARERS**

46. The Parent Council will be kept fully informed of progress during their regular meetings.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

47. Any additional support will be provided through existing budget provision.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

48. There are no legal implications.

## **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

49. There are no risk implications.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

50. No negative impact.

## **COMMUNITY PLANNING/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

51. There are no Community Planning or policy implications.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

52. It is recommended that Governance and Scrutiny Committee
- (i) Notes the publication of the HMle Inspection Report for Darvel Primary School;
  - (ii) Notes the next steps; and
  - (iii) Otherwise, notes the contents of the report.

**Alex McPhee**

**Depute Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer: Economy and Skills**

**21 September 2017**

**IB/AW**

Members wishing further information should contact Alan Ward, Head of Education, Tel: 01563 576126 or Ian Burgoyne, Strategic Education Group Manager, Tel: 01563 554615.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: ALAN WARD**

23 May 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

We are trying out some new approaches to inspection. You can find out about our engagement with stakeholders and the approaches we are trying out as a result at [Future approaches to inspection and review](#) on our website. The inspection of your school was carried out using one of our new approaches.

In March, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited your school for a total of two days. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate aspects of the quality of leadership and children's achievements.

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

- Polite courteous children who are caring and supportive of each other.
- Children who are increasingly taking responsibility for aspects of school life.
- The impact of the headteacher in building a school community.

The following areas for improvement were agreed with the headteacher and a representative from East Ayrshire Council:

- Continue to develop self-evaluation so that children can achieve as well as they can.
  - Improve staff skills in analysing and interpreting a range of data to support children's progress more effectively.
  - Develop a clear plan to take forward improvements in literacy.
-

**Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to identify what is working well and what needs to be improved in the work of the school.** You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school*<sup>1</sup>? Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of quality indicators to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Darvel Primary School

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement</b> | <b>good</b>         |
| <b>QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</b>   | <b>satisfactory</b> |

This letter and a more detailed document called the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at <https://www.education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/east-ayrshire/8220522>.

### 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. East Ayrshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Peter Gollogly  
HM Inspector

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<sup>1</sup> How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) 2015 [How good is our school? \(fourth edition\)](#)

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