



**Balmerino Primary School and Nursery Class**  
**Standards and Quality Report 2022-23**  
*Achieving Excellence and Equity*

Draft: June 2023, Published September 2023

<b>Context</b>				
<b>School and Nursery Roll</b>	<p>Figures are correct as of as of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023</p> <p>Session 2022-23: 48 P2-7 Pupils arranged into 2 classes (rose to 49 for part of the year)</p> <p>Nursery Roll began the session at 7 and has increased to 11</p> <p>Primary Roll for 2023-24 is projected at 45 pupils arranged into 2 classes</p> <p>Nursery Roll for 2023-24 projected at 10 in August raising to 12 in April.</p>			
<b>Free Meal Entitlement</b>	<p>14.5% - as of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023</p> <p>This is those P1-7 pupils registered for Free School Meals – it does not include those in P1-5 with a universal entitlement only.</p>			
<b>SIMD Profile for establishment</b>	<p>From Summary of Inspection Findings, May 2023: 'Balmerino Primary School and Nursery Class is located in the village of Gauldry in Fife. The school has a large, rural catchment area covering a number of villages, hamlets and farms. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) area 8. However, the school recognises the diverse socio-economic circumstances of rural communities.'</p>			
<b>Attendance Rate as of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023:</b> 96.63%	<b>Authorised Absences</b>	2.67%	<b>Unauthorised Absences</b>	0.69%
<b>Attainment Scotland Fund Allocation (PEF and SAC)</b>	£6125			

**Vision, Values and Aims**  
**Our School. Our Future.**

We are Kind, Gentle and Helpful and have Ownership of our Learning.

We aim to provide:

- Opportunities
- Wellbeing
- Learning
- Support

We learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Wellbeing Indicators and about how these can support us as we grow up. We develop our understanding of sustainability, our impact on the environment and our responsibilities.

To support Wellbeing, our values are:

- Inclusion
- Friendship

- Respect
- Personal Achievement

To support Learning, our values are:

- Perseverance
- Independence
- Enthusiasm
- Curiosity
- Effort
- Teamwork

As we deliver our curriculum, we aim to provide quality resources and make use of the whole environment including the school grounds and the local and wider area. We embrace our rural setting to enhance learners' experiences. We involve children in planning their own learning, in target setting and in discussing their progress and next steps in learning. We maintain good links with parents, carers and the community. We make opportunities to discuss feelings and how we act upon them and we know that we can learn from our mistakes. We celebrate our success. We respect and celebrate diversity and recognise individual needs. We prepare our learners for transition and develop skills for life and work.

Click here to read [The Story of Our Vision Values and Aims](#)

### **Key Contextual Information**

We were pleased to welcome an inspection team from Education Scotland to our school in March 2023. The report, published in May 2023, has validated our self-evaluation and informed, in part, the writing of this report. The inspection team noted this information: "The school has experienced a number of staffing challenges over the past two years. The school roll has fallen in recent years. Forty-nine children currently attend the school across two multi-composite classes. At the time of the inspection there were no children at Primary 1. Attendance is consistently higher than the national average. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)."

### **P2-7 Attendance**

Supporting Attendance has been an important part of our Covid Recovery work. In session 2022-23, we have communicated regularly with all primary parents about their child's attendance rate with an aim that all children's rate would be 95% or better across the year. Most children have achieved an attendance rate of 94.1% or better and the average attendance across the school has risen from 94.8% to 96.6% (as of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023). We have exceeded the stretch target of 95.7% as set by Fife Council. Moving forward, we will no longer share attendance rates with parents through the year at a universal level but will continue to communicate closely with those whose rate is more than one percentage point below the Excellent category on their June 2023 report or where concerns arise.

## **Improvement Priorities Session 2022 – 2023**

### **Priority 1 – Development of Skills and Accreditation through Outdoor Learning**

**NIF Priority:** Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

**NIF Driver:** School Improvement Parental Engagement

**HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators:** 2.2 Curriculum

Has this priority been: (please highlight)

Fully Achieved

No

Partially achieved

Yes

Continued into next session

No

**Progress:**

We have monitored outdoor learning activities to note curricular areas and skills for life and work being undertaken. We have begun to develop our grounds for outdoor learning and we have liaised with Scrap Antics in Dundee to purchase loose parts and skill children up in their use. We have investigated Natural Connections and examples of Skills Progressions.

**Impact:**

Our monitoring has evidenced the range of curricular areas being delivered in the outdoors (maths, literacy, health and wellbeing, science, technologies) and the skills being developed (leadership, problem solving, working with others). Our inspection by Education Scotland, highlighted this as a strength of the school: "All teachers incorporate high-quality outdoor learning into their planning. They use the local area well to enrich children's experiences through outdoor learning. Children develop a range of skills in leadership, communication and problem solving through their experiences at the local forest. They also apply their learning from other curricular areas. For example, children learn about compass points, directional language and angles and apply this in orienteering." Seesaw journals further evidence learning and skills development in the outdoors.

**Next Steps:**

Given the feedback from Education Scotland regarding Outdoor Learning, we do not intend to keep this as an Improvement Priority into session 2023/24. We recognise the need to continue to deliver high quality Outdoor Learning and this will continue to be part of the life and work of the school. We have not embarked on an accreditation programme and do not judge starting to do so as a priority but it remains an option in time. We will continue to refer to the Skills for Life and work in planning across the curriculum and in different contexts (including Outdoor Learning) and in time this may lead to a skills development but this will also be addressed through the life and work of the school.

**Priority 2 - Learning Teaching and Assessment of Writing P2-7**

NIF Priority: Improvement in Attainment, particularly in numeracy and literacy

NIF Driver: School Improvement

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators: 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

Has this priority been: (please highlight)

Fully Achieved

No

Partially achieved

Yes

Continued into next session

Yes

**Progress:**

We carried out an 'Attitudes to Writing' Survey in September with All children working at First Level Progressing or beyond and repeated it in June 2023 with the same group. We have had a focus on peer and self-assessment in writing and on providing effective feedback. The P5/6/7 class have had a focus on writing for a reason, with strong links made to IDL work, and on allowing elements of choice. The P2/3/4 class have made use of a modelling system 'The Write Stuff' to develop techniques as writers and within sentence structure. We have introduced Assistive Technology for a few learners to support their attainment.

**Impact:**

All children have taken part in structured writing lessons and have had opportunities to give and receive feedback on their writing supported by success criteria. All children have made progress on their prior levels of attainment. The inspectors recognised the following: "Across the school, children write across a range of genre and for a range of purposes. Younger children create a range of short texts using a new structured planning format to guide their work. They spell a majority of familiar words correctly. Older children use increasingly complex sentences in their writing. They organise ideas logically in paragraphs." And "Teachers have introduced assistive technology to support a few learners. This is having a very positive impact on their progress."

The Inspection team recommended some next steps with regards to this Improvement Priority: "They (school staff) are developing approaches to assessing writing using National Benchmarks. The team should continue to develop further a shared understanding of the assessment process. This should

ensure assessment is integral to the planning process... Across the school, children need support to improve their presentation, spelling and use of punctuation in their extended writing.”

The gap between attainment in writing and attainment in other areas of literacy is beginning to close and we have exceeded our stretch target in writing which represents an increase on the predictions in June 2022. (see Attainment Section below).

Analysis of the Baseline and Follow-Up Attitudes to Writing Survey indicates the following:

- As a whole school group, the children feel more confident at coming up with ideas for writing: average rating has increased from 6.59 to 7.29.
- As a whole school group, the children feel more confident with organising their ideas in writing: average rating has increased from 6.38 to 7.82.
- As a whole school group, the children feel more confident with spelling and with using openers and connectives.
- As a whole school group, the children do not have increased confident with vocabulary and punctuation.
- The survey is not showing evidence that children feel more confident that they know what they can do to get better at writing.

Focusing on a small target group of learners with significant barriers to writing: 75% increased their rate for 'I like writing' and 'I am good at writing'. 50% increased their rate at 'I know what I can do to get better at writing'. This group have had targeted interventions, including the use of assistive technology, in place.

#### Next Steps:

- Focus on Tools for Writing and assessment against the Benchmarks to meet the recommendation in the Inspection Report
- Share Good Practice within our school and with Wormit, our partner school within the joint headship, developing a suite of approaches to be used across both schools – this will include Workshop for Literacy, Model for Improvement, writing for a reason/audience awareness and the Write Stuff.
- Continue to work on providing effective feedback.

### Priority 3 - Ensure Quality Personal Learning Planning in Nursery

**NIF Priority:** . Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

**NIF Driver:** Assessment of children's progress

**HGIOELC Quality Indicators:** 3.2 Securing Children's progress

Has this priority been: (please highlight)

**Fully Achieved**

yes

Partially achieved

Continued into next session

#### Progress:

All staff have engaged with the Care Inspectorate documentation and all children have plans which meet the full expectations of the document and which evidence progress through quality observation comments. Their plans support us to ensure their learning is at the right level for them.

**Impact:**

The following was noted in the Inspection Report: “The team cooperate and share ideas effectively to improve how they document children’s learning. Practitioners record experiences and achievements using an online learning platform, individual personal learning journals, learning walls, planning records and displays. Regular meetings about how well children are progressing are supporting practitioners to take a more strategic approach to how they plan, assess and document children’s progress...Practitioners record useful information about children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. The team promptly identify children who may require additional support. Keyworkers use their knowledge of child development and strategies to support children well. Practitioners effectively implement agreed strategies for individual children.”

**Next Steps:**

From our own self-evaluation work and from feedback from the Inspectors, we recognise the need to plan monitoring and tracking routines strategically drawing on all information/observations recorded about children. We will do this through a carefully planned QA calendar, this does not need to be retained as an Improvement Priority.

**Priority 4 - Progression in French (1+2) Nursery-P7**

NIF Priority: Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

NIF Driver: Teacher Professionalism

HGIOS 4 Quality Indicators: 2.2 Curriculum  
HGIOELC Quality Indicators: 2.2 Curriculum

Has this priority been: (please highlight)	Fully Achieved	yes	Partially achieved		Continued into next session	
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**Progress:**

We have established that we are a ‘French School’ and built in daily and assembly routines in French as well as stand alone lessons. Older children can hold a simple conversation. We have engaged with cluster colleagues in line with the Madras Cluster improvement plan and are delivering the ‘Madras agreement’ which is in place to ensure all S1s come into Madras with a similar experience.

**Impact:**

All children have experienced French and all can give at least simple responses in French. The ‘Madras agreement’ is progressive and we will continue to deliver it over the coming years. This was recognised by inspectors: “Children currently learn French as their main modern language. Teachers ensure children experience progression and depth in their learning.”

**Next Steps:**

- Continue to deliver the Madras Agreement and use Fife Council’s Progression Pyramids
- Introduce L3 (Spanish) in P5/6/7 to ensure a 1+2 approach

This can be carried out as part of the life and work of the school, it will not need to be a stand alone improvement priority.

**Priority 5 - Parental Engagement in Nursery**

NIF Priority: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

NIF Driver: Parental Engagement

HGIOELC Quality Indicators: 2.5 Family Learning

Has this priority been: (please highlight)

Fully Achieved

yes

Partially achieved

Continued into next session

**Progress:**

Staff have introduced regular Bookbug and Peep sessions and shared starts have been offered consistently through the year.

**Impact:**

Almost all children have had a parent attend Bookbug or Peep sessions or both and all of these parents have shared at least one follow up activity at home with their child. Parents and children have provided positive feedback after sessions:

*"Lovely Session! So nice to learn the songs you sing at Nursery..."*

*"Thank you for letting me bring (my younger child), its great seeing both my kids bond with other children."*

*"It's great to be able to come back into Nursery and join in with PEEP with the children."*

*"Loved the peep session. Really nice to spend time in the nursery doing an activity and getting an insight into the children's learning."*

This work has impacted positively on children's learning experiences in Nursery and at home as activities have been followed up there.

**Next Steps:**

Continue to provide these opportunities through the life and work of the Nursery.

## Attainment of Children (Primary Classes)

Percentage of children achieving the nationally expected level in June 2023:

Literacy		Numeracy	
Stretch Target	Actual	Stretch Target	Actual
78.1%	94%	82.5%	81.5%

### Evaluative statement of attainment over time.

From Summary of Inspection Findings, May 2023: "Overall, children make good progress through early, first and second CfE levels. Children with additional support needs make good progress from their prior levels of attainment... Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children make good progress in reading, writing and talking and listening... Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics."

Percentage of learners in P1, 4 and 7 who achieved the nationally expected level at the end of each session over time:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	
Reading	71%	90%	100%	
Writing	63%	80%	94%	
Listening and Talking	79%	90%	100%	
Numeracy	64%	86%	81.5%	

In reading the above table, it is important to note that we are comparing different cohorts of pupils each year and that in the context of a small school, a small number of pupils account for a large number of percentage points. However, it is helpful to look at trends over time. The gap between attainment in Writing and the other English/Literacy organisers is beginning to close. Writing remains a priority to build on and consolidate the pedagogical approaches introduced this year but there is less concern now about attainment against Reading and Listening and Talking. The attainment gap between Literacy and Numeracy has also begun to close. There remains a need to support specific children with Numeracy interventions to support raising attainment in this area but there is not evidence that Numeracy pedagogy needs to be addressed as an improvement priority.

The declaration of levels achieved in June 2023 has been triangulated by SNSA data, by moderation exercises within and beyond the school and through the work with Education Scotland in the inspection week.

### Evidence of significant wider achievements

#### Working with Others

All children have developed team work skills through Outdoor Learning Activities and regular trips to local woodlands.

About half of the P5-7 children have developed team work skills by representing the school in a football match or tournament.

More than half of P2-7 children have developed team work skills by attending an extra curricular sports club.

7 P6/7s developed team work skills through representing the school at the rotary quiz and/or at Techo-challenge.

#### Enterprise/Employability

All Nursery children had the experience of setting up and running a café for their parents and family members.

All Nursery-P7 pupils have had the experience of setting up and running stalls at the summer fair.

All Nursery-P7 children have experienced STEM activities and just less than half of P2-7 children had a parent join them at a STEM workshop.

#### Problem Solving

All P2-7 children have developed problem solving skills through the context of Outdoor learning e.g. P2/3/4 children using knowledge of positional language to find objects hidden in the woods and P5/6/7 children searching for clues in the woodland to solve algebraic problems.

All Nursery-P7 children have experienced enhanced Loose Parts play experiences through our partnership with Scrap Antics and this has led to increased Problems Solving Activities.



### **Leadership**

Three P6 pupils have developed their leadership skills through their role as a peer mediator.

Half of P5-7 children have taken on a role as a sports/dance leader, running sessions for younger children.

### **Cultural Activities**

All Nursery-P7 children rehearsed and/or performed in a Christmas Concert – P4-7 children took responsibility for writing their lines and Nursery-P4 children took on a character. All children experienced the chance to sing together and in parts.

All P5-7 children extended the experience of the Christmas Concert by performing for Thursday Café (a Community Café)

Most P7 children have taken the opportunity to have lunch at Thursday Café – meeting local residents and developing life skills.

All Nursery-P7 children have explored the local area through outings and planned experiences: Nursery children have travelled by Public Bus to the library and café in Newport, P2/3/4 have made use of the local area to explore road safety and develop skills in a real context, All P5-7s have achieved Level 1 Bikeability and all P6/7s have achieved level 2. P7s have enhanced this with a Mountain Biking experience at Lochore Meadows.

All P2-7 children learnt Scots Poems and Dance in the context of planning and hosting a Ceilidh. Almost all children attended the skill to display these skills and more than half had a parent or other family member share the experience with them.

Almost all children in Nursery-P7 experienced the excitement of attending a Pantomime.

## **Feedback from External Scrutiny**

### **Extended Learning Partnership**

The full report is available [here](#).

The Learning Partnership Visit (November 2022) supported the school by validating our self-evaluation, rationale for improvement priorities and CfE declarations and by supporting us to make best use of our collegiate time and work together in the next six months. Of key importance was the feedback to:

- ensure all teaching staff knew attainment trends over time
- ensure celebration of personal achievement was consistent and evident
- seek support to improve ICT infrastructure
- consolidate and ensure consistency in approaches to feedback to learners

The effectiveness of the Learning Partnership (over time) was noted by the inspection team: “The headteacher seeks the views of colleagues on the quality of learning and teaching through the learning partnership. Local authority colleagues and peer headteachers provide valuable feedback on the work of the school.”

## **Education Scotland - Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

The school was inspected in March 2023 and the Report Published in May. The report is available [here](#).

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

- The work of the headteacher and staff to ensure all children are welcome and included in the nursery class and school. Children are happy, settled and feel safe.
- High-quality learning in the outdoors. Children experience learning that is motivating, relevant and meaningful.
- Skilled, creative approaches taken by nursery practitioners. They respond very well to the development needs of all children. All children in the nursery make very good progress in their learning.

The following areas for improvement were identified:

- The headteacher and staff need to continue to develop approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring children's progress and achievement across the nursery and school. This will support children to make the best possible progress across the curriculum.
- The headteacher needs to develop further strategic approaches to evaluating the work of the school. Working with staff, she should ensure rigorous quality assurance activities support improvement in learning experiences across the school.



The improvement areas had both already been identified through our self-evaluation processes. These will be addressed through the life and work of the school and a carefully planned QA calendar. They will not need to form specific improvement areas.

## PEF Evaluation/Impact

### Targeted Interventions

- Numeracy
- Literacy
- Health and Wellbeing

### Progress:

As planned, we have provided regular interventions to pupils not on track in Numeracy and Literacy and our delivery of this has been enhanced by additional PSA hours (funded by PEF) and additionality in our teaching staff resource. These interventions have included:

- Additional reading using Project X and Read, Write Inc
- Use of Assistive Technologies
- Additional use of universal ICT packages (Spelling Frame and Sumdog) and a targeted package (Nessy)
- Targeted Numeracy play opportunities
- Numeracy coaching manuals (Plus 1 and Power of 2)
- Highland Literacy Intervention (Phonological Awareness)

Based on monitoring and tracking information, we have also carried out some playground work to develop the range of activities and support readiness to learn following play times. This work has been carried out by PSAs funded from PEF and our additionality teacher. We have made a link with Scrap Antics in Dundee and have purchased Loose Parts and Loose Parts training.

### Impact:

All pupils not on track (or at risk of not being on track) in one or more areas of Numeracy or Literacy have had an intervention in place. All pupils have made progress from their prior point of learning. More than half of the pupils not on track in one or more areas at the start of session 2022-23 are now on track in at least one of those areas. All the pupils at risk of not being on track are now confidently on track.

This impact was noted and therefore triangulated by the Inspection Team: "All staff have a strong understanding of the range of barriers to learning children may face. They are particularly aware of the unique opportunities and challenges children living in a rural community face. The headteacher keeps a check on the progress and attainment of all children with potential barriers to their learning. Teachers work effectively with each other to identify specific gaps in children's learning during termly planning and tracking meetings. They act quickly to plan and implement strategies to close the gaps. Teachers have introduced assistive technology to support a few learners. This is having a very positive impact on their progress. The headteacher effectively tracks the progress and attainment of the most vulnerable children. There is robust evidence to demonstrate staff are beginning to close the attainment gap."

At the start of session 2022-23, 26% of the P2-7 cohort were not on track for Literacy and 14% were not on Track for Numeracy. At the start of 2023-24, this has reduced to 22% and 13% for the new P3-7 cohort (there are no P2s).

School/Setting Name: Balmerino Primary School and Nursery Class

NIF Quality Indicators (HGIOS 4) School Self- Evaluation				
Quality Indicator	2020 -2021	2021- 2022	2022-2023	Inspection Evaluation <i>(since August 2022)</i>
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Good	Good	Good	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Good	Good	Good

NIF Quality Indicators (HGIOS ELC) Early Years Self- Evaluation (Nursery)				
Quality Indicator	2020 -2021	2021- 2022	2022-2023	Inspection Evaluation <i>(since August 2022)</i>
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Good	Good	Good	Good
3.2 Securing children's progress	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good

Care Inspectorate (within last 3 years)	Grade (if applicable)		
	2020 -2021	2021- 2022	2022-2023
Quality of care and support			
Quality of environment			
Quality of staffing			
Quality of leadership and management			

Headteacher: Lucy Jess (who completed SQR)