

Summarised inspection findings

Dens Road Primary School

Dundee City Council

22 September 2026

Key contextual information

Dens Road Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in the east of the city of Dundee serving the Hilltown and Stobswell areas.

The leadership team comprises the headteacher and a depute headteacher. The headteacher has been in post for 10 months.

Most of the children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles one and two. The current roll is 225 children across 10 classes, however the number of children at each stage varies considerably across the year. Senior leaders report that in May 2025 49% of children require additional support with their learning and 43% are entitled to free school meals.

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	

- Senior leaders and teachers have established a very positive, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. Staff know children well and value highly their views and opinions. As a result, children feel listened to and are increasingly confident in contributing to discussions about their learning and the life of the school. The school’s strong partnership with the Children’s Parliament is extending children’s understanding of their rights and responsibilities and developing their confidence as informed, responsible global citizens. Children benefit from meaningful opportunities to influence change, which is strengthening their participation and ownership in learning.
- The school’s values of ‘Happiness, Nurture, Aspiration, Respect and Integrity’ are embedded in daily interactions and underpin the calm and positive ethos across the school. Children are welcoming and engage positively and respectfully with staff, visitors and one another. They are proud of their work on children’s rights and anti-racism. A strong focus on diversity is deepening children’s understanding of fairness, equality and identity, while strengthening their sense of belonging and engagement in learning. The consistently high standard of behaviour across the school contributes positively to children’s engagement and to a nurturing, purposeful learning atmosphere.
- Staff create well-organised, consistent and purposeful learning environments where children’s work and achievements are celebrated. Classroom environments support learning effectively, promote children’s independence and provide appropriate support for emotional wellbeing. As a result, children are settled and ready to learn. They are increasingly able to sustain attention for longer periods of time and work independently.

- Senior leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders, developed an ambitious learning and teaching standard known as the 'Dens Road Standard for High-Quality Learning and Teaching'. This enables greater consistency in teaching practice and provides staff with a shared understanding of key features of high-quality learning and teaching. Most teachers deliver well-planned lessons and use a range of useful individual, paired and group activities to support children's participation in learning. In a few lessons the pace of learning could be brisker with tasks and activities set at the right level. This would help children remain more fully engaged in their learning.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. This helps children to understand the purpose of learning and what is expected of them. Teachers use questioning effectively in most lessons to check children's understanding and reinforce learning. Teachers should use a wider range of questioning techniques to develop children's critical thinking and deepen their learning further.
- Almost all teachers share intended learning and explain how children can be successful. In a few lessons, children understand very well the purpose of learning and what they need to do to be successful. This is where intended learning and steps for success are presented in both written and visual formats. As a result, children are increasingly able to reflect on their progress and talk meaningfully about their learning. In a few lessons, used alongside teacher feedback, this strengthens self- and peer-assessment and helps children identify their next steps in learning more accurately. Teachers are well placed to share and develop further this strong practice.
- Children at P1 benefit from regular opportunities to engage in a range of structured learning through play. Teachers use spaces and resources effectively to support children to apply their learning in meaningful play contexts. This encourages children's independence and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers should continue to draw on national guidance as they develop play pedagogy further.
- Most teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance teaching and support children's engagement in learning. Digital applications are used well to scaffold tasks, provide feedback and promote increasing independence. This helps children to access learning more confidently. Children develop curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities. They enjoy learning using specific classroom resources such as the STEM tables, curiosity cubes and in the dedicated 'maker space'. Senior leaders should now develop a progressive outdoor learning framework to help children apply their knowledge and skills in new and relevant local contexts.
- Senior leaders have created an effective assessment framework. The framework provides teachers with clear expectations for planning, carrying out and using assessment information to support learning and teaching. Teachers make effective use of national Benchmarks alongside the school's own assessment processes. They use a range of formative, summative and standardised assessment approaches well in literacy and numeracy. Increasingly, staff use assessment information effectively to inform planning and match learning more closely to children's needs. As a result, children experience greater progression in their learning and are better supported to make progress. Staff should continue to develop these approaches across all curricular areas.

- Teachers participate keenly in moderation activities within school and across their school cluster group. These opportunities strengthen professional judgements of achievement of a level and improve reliability in assessment decisions. As planned, teachers should continue to engage in a range of regular high-quality moderation activities within and beyond the school.
- All teachers plan, track and evaluate successfully children's progress across all curricular areas. Progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing is reviewed rigorously three times across the year. Senior leaders use well the recently improved systems to track the progress of individuals and groups of children carefully. This supports effectively teachers' professional judgements about children's progress in learning. Teachers are beginning to use data well to inform their planning and identify targeted interventions. This helps to make sure learning is matched more closely to children's needs. As planned, senior leaders should continue to measure the impact and effectiveness of interventions. This should ensure children and groups receive the most appropriate intervention at the right time to support their continued progress.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are on track to achieve national expectations in reading, writing and numeracy this session. Most children at early and first levels, are on track to achieve national expectations in listening and talking. At second level almost all children are achieving expected levels. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards individual learning targets. A few children work beyond expected levels in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen to adults and follow instructions well. At first level, most children listen and talk confidently. They identify the difference between fact and opinion accurately. At second level, almost all children show respect for the views of others and give appropriate feedback to their peers. They speak with confidence when sharing information and build appropriately on the ideas of others. Children at all levels would benefit from further experiences to present to a range of audiences, for example, presenting at assemblies and performances.

Reading

- At early level, most children identify accurately initial sounds and known common words. They answer simple questions about stories and their likes and dislikes when choosing a book. They would benefit from support to develop further their skills in hearing and saying sound patterns and rhyme. At first level, most children recognise the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They are less confident discussing features of non-fiction texts such as glossary and index. At second level, most children apply a range of strategies appropriately to read and understand texts. They identify different features of language used by authors confidently. At first and second levels, children should be encouraged to choose books from class and school libraries more often to encourage reading for enjoyment.

Writing

- At early level, most children use capital letters and full stops accurately to punctuate sentences. They use their known sounds and knowledge of common words to spell familiar words correctly when writing simple sentences. At first level, children plan and create texts using adjectives,

adverbs and conjunctions effectively. At second level, most children regularly write extended pieces well. They punctuate sentences accurately.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children who require additional support with their learning make strong progress towards their individual targets.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children identify the number before, the number after and missing numbers in a sequence within 20. They confidently order numbers to 20. Children are less confident when subtracting numbers. At first level most children confidently round numbers to the nearest 10 and solve two step problems. They need more practice when working with fractions, decimals and percentages. At second level most children have a good understanding of number processes but are not yet confident when solving simple algebraic equations.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. They compare lengths using appropriate language such as longer and shorter. Children need more experience in describing and sorting common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects according to various criteria. At first level, most children name a range of simple 2D shapes and recognise these shapes in different orientations and sizes. They are not as confident describing different angles or 3D objects using specific vocabulary. At second level most children use correct mathematical language including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles identified within shapes in the environment. They would benefit from applying their knowledge and skills in more practical activities including using digital technologies to explore shape further.

Information handling

- At early level children have begun to collect data about, for example, their favourite colours and represent this in a bar chart. At first level, most children use appropriate vocabulary to describe the likelihood of events occurring. They use a variety of different methods to display data, for example, as block graphs or bar graphs. At second level, most children display data appropriately, choosing a suitable scale when creating graphs. Across all stages, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to demonstrate how to use and analyse data for different purposes. This includes using digital technologies more effectively.

Attainment over time

- Attainment data over time varies, due in part to the significant number of changes of children at every stage each session. Senior leaders have implemented effective systems to track and monitor children's attainment levels in literacy and numeracy over time. They analyse data well to consider patterns in children's progress. Overall, data shows that most children maintain expected national standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy as they progress through the school. Staff should now track children's progress and attainment across all curricular areas.
- Attendance has improved over the past three years. In session 2024/25, overall attendance was 93.9%. Senior leaders closely monitor the attendance of all children. Senior leaders share attendance data and information about the impact of lower attendance with parents

regularly. They proactively work with families of children whose attendance is a concern. This includes tailored support for children and meetings with parents of a few children. Children have identified some of the factors that impact their attendance at school. Staff use this information to identify appropriate individual and group interventions and supports. These interventions are leading to increased attendance of these children. A minority of children currently have attendance below 90% largely but not exclusively due to illness, holidays during term time and family circumstances. There are no children on part-time timetables. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of and delight in sharing their many achievements both within and outwith school with their peers and with staff. These are valued highly by staff and other children. Children's successes and achievements are very well recognised and celebrated in a variety of ways. These include through the whole school achievement board, fabulous fruity Fridays, and certificates given to children who exemplify the school values. Where appropriate, and supported well by partners, these achievements are formally recognised through accredited national awards. This includes the Dynamic Youth and Hi5 awards.
- Children's participation in activities and their achievements are tracked well by staff. As a result, staff are able to identify those children who may be at risk of missing out from these valuable experiences. This allows staff to support children to take part in a variety of activities they may not have experienced before. This includes sport and musical activities. Senior leaders recognise that they now need to develop a greater awareness in children of the valuable, lifelong skills they are developing through taking part in these activities.
- Children experience a wide range of leadership opportunities within their classrooms and across the school. These include as for example, Rotakids leaders, Culture Club and Languages Leaders. Every child in P7 has the opportunity to be a leader as part of final memory making in their primary education. Children take these responsibilities very seriously and as a result demonstrate very well the school values of nurture, aspiration, happiness, respect and integrity.

Equity for all learners

- Almost all staff have a strong knowledge of the socio-economic context of children and their families. They understand well the barriers families may face in accessing fully all aspects of school life and put in place actions to mitigate these. Children and families benefit from a range of approaches offered to them. For example, the 'pop-up shop' and 'little larder' provide free clothing and food items for families. Staff ensure financial constraints do not prevent children from taking part in opportunities for learning and achievement. For example, all children experience a local trip through the 'Dens Road Discovers Dundee' initiative. Children learn about the culture, heritage and natural features of their local area.
- Senior leaders, in consultation with the Parent Council and staff, use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) spending to enhance staffing and provide additional resources. Staff use data and contextual information well to plan interventions to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy and support children's wellbeing and attendance. For example, identified children participate in family reading sessions, with family development staff. Children receiving support from interventions are monitored carefully and are making appropriate progress against specific targets. Staff have successfully narrowed the attainment gap in literacy as a result of these interventions. As identified, senior leaders should continue to work with staff to monitor and evaluate fully the

impact of all interventions used to close the identified attainment gaps. They should use this information to inform next steps in improving outcomes for children.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.