

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 7 September 2015

Special School Inspection at Kaimes School

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| Item number | 5.1 |
| Report number | |
| Wards | Ward 16: Liberton/Gilmerton |

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| Coalition pledges | PO5 |
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Gillian Tee

Executive Director of Communities and Families

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Executive summary

Special School Inspection at Kaimes School

Summary

- Members should be aware that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), now known as Education Scotland (ES), undertake an annual sample of inspections across Scotland (approximately 240 per year) covering nursery, primary, special and secondary schools. A letter to parents/carers on each inspection is published approximately three months after the inspection. On the basis of this letter the school with the support of the authority amends its improvement plan to take account of any agreed areas for improvement.
- Inspectors usually revisit a school within a year of the publication of the letter where weak or unsatisfactory practice has been identified. For all other schools inspected the local authority will inform the parents about the progress made in improving the quality of education.
- This letter (Appendix 1) and evaluations (Appendix 2) advises the Sub-committee on the outcomes of the initial inspection.

Recommendations

The Sub-committee is requested to:

- note the findings of the report including the areas where the education authority and the school should continue to improve the school; and
- receive an authority inspection follow through report within one year of the publication of the inspection letter.

Measures of success

The report identified the following key strengths:

- the school's approaches to helping children and young people with autism to develop communication and social interaction skills;
- opportunities for young people to develop skills in expressive arts, particularly in digital imagery; and
- the school's partnerships with the community and other organisations and the positive impact on learning experiences for children and young people.

Financial impact

There are no financial implications contained in the ES report.

Equalities impact

There are considered to be no infringements of the rights of the child.

Tracking of pupil performance by gender and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) is undertaken at school level and there are no adverse impacts.

Sustainability impact

None.

Consultation and engagement

Parents, pupils and staff completed an ES questionnaire prior to the inspection.

Background reading / external references

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports>

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| Appendices | 1. Inspection letter to parent/carers 2. Evaluations |

16 June 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Kaimes School
The City of Edinburgh Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children and young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children and young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including health and wellbeing, how the school supports children and young people with autism and the impact of recent interdisciplinary projects. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's and young people's education.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

Across the school, children and young people are happy and motivated. Relationships with staff are very positive and this helps children and young people communicate confidently with adults and with their peers. The focus on personal and social development is helping children and young people understand their emotions and communicate their feelings. Staff provide good opportunities for children and young people to learn in the local and wider community. For example, the outdoor learning programme allows children and young people to participate in skiing, canoeing and orienteering. The school has very good links with a range of local partners such as the Midlothian Ranger Service and Drake Music. These links provide meaningful and interesting learning experiences. In a few classes, children and young people are beginning to understand what they are learning and what they need to do to improve. This now needs to happen in all classes across the school. Young people in the secondary department are developing skills to help them for life after school through work experience in local businesses such as restaurants and a local farm. Links with Edinburgh College are also helping young people extend their learning and gain qualifications. A recent animation project, *Unsung Stories*, helped children and young people learn about how to make films and develop skills in digital imagery. Some children and young people represent their class on pupil councils and the eco committee. There is scope for more children and young people to take on leadership roles.

Children and young people are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Across the school, they are able to read stories and other texts appropriate to their age. They

listen well to staff and to each other. Learners are thinking about how they can improve their communication and they participate well in group discussions. Children and young people are developing and applying number skills in a range of contexts. At the primary stages, children are developing a good understanding about number. They are using money within real life situations such as buying items and working out change. Some young people at the senior stages are able to use trigonometry and Pythagoras' theorem to solve problems about right-angled triangles. Young people at the senior stages have opportunities to gain National Qualifications. However, there is scope for them to attain more highly and across a wider range of subjects, if appropriate. The school should further develop partnerships with local mainstream schools to help young people access more subjects. Children and young people are making good progress and achieving well in health and wellbeing. The recent Food for Thought project has helped learners develop an awareness of food and health. Children and young people are able to demonstrate good understanding and application of personal hygiene around practical food activities. A few young people are now able to travel independently to school and recognise how to keep themselves safe whilst doing so. The school's focus on social communication and emotional wellbeing is having a positive impact on relationships across the school. Children and young people say that they have more friendships with others and the behaviour of children and young people has improved.

How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

Staff work well together to provide a caring and nurturing environment for children and young people. They have improved their knowledge of autism and are skilled at adapting their approaches to take account of children's and young people's responses and interests. The school has developed good approaches to behaviour support. In most classes, tasks, activities and resources are appropriate to the needs of learners. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and the school needs to ensure that all children and young people have access to good quality learning opportunities throughout the whole day. The school works successfully with a range of partners and other agencies to support the needs of learners. Some parents would like more information about their children's progress and would like the school to communicate more effectively with them about what their child is learning.

Staff in the school have recently reviewed the curriculum using national guidance and agreed what improvements they will make over the next three years. Work on curriculum development is leading to improvements in literacy and numeracy programmes. The school now needs to further improve the curriculum and ensure children and young people are learning across all subjects. The curriculum at the senior phase needs further development to give young people more choices about subjects and qualifications. The school needs to ensure that young people can continue with their learning until the end of S6 to enable them to attain as highly as possible. Specialist programmes and courses which focus on social and communication skills are an important part of the curriculum and help children and young people develop skills for learning, life and work. A wide range of community partners contribute to the school's curriculum. For example, the Interact Project with the Thistle Foundation uses drama to engage young people using active enquiry and

character creation to build confidence. These partnerships are helping the school develop a curriculum which prepares children and young people for life beyond school.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The school's approaches to self-evaluation provide staff and stakeholders with clear information on priorities for improvement. The headteacher has developed self-evaluation roles and responsibilities for all staff across the school. Some aspects for improvement are having a positive impact on children and young people. For example, the school's approaches to improving behaviour are allowing children, young people and staff to work together to resolve issues and develop better relationships. Some priorities such as how the curriculum is being developed needs to be evaluated more rigorously to determine if they are having a positive impact on children and young people.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The school's approaches to helping children and young people with autism to develop communication and social interaction skills.
- Opportunities for young people to develop skills in expressive arts, particularly in digital imagery.
- The school's partnerships with the community and other organisations and the positive impact on learning experiences for children and young people.

We discussed with staff and The City of Edinburgh Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- The school should continue to develop the curriculum in line with national guidance.
- Increase pace and challenge in learning in order to improve attainment.
- Further develop approaches to self-evaluation to secure improved outcomes for children and young people.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, The City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Monica McGeever
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/Kai mesSchoolEdinburghCity.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good 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?*¹. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Kaimes School.

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| Improvements in performance | satisfactory |
| Learners' experiences | good |
| Meeting learning needs | good |

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

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| The curriculum | satisfactory |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | satisfactory |

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/KaimesSchoolEdinburghCity.asp>

¹ *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf
Please note that the term "adequate" in the document has been replaced with "satisfactory".