

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 7 September 2015

Primary School Inspection at Dalmeny Primary School and Nursery Class

Item number	5.2
Report number	
Wards	Ward 1: Almond

Links

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive summary

Primary School Inspection at Dalmeny Primary School and Nursery Class

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:

- happy, polite children who engage well in learning and make very good progress;
- valuable partnerships within and beyond the school which support children's learning and widen opportunities for achievement;
- the use of information and communication technology to inspire learning and children's confidence in using a wide range of software;
- the progress made in implementing Curriculum for Excellence; and

- the clear direction provided by the headteacher and the commitment of staff and children to lead improvements.

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/carer 2. Evaluations

19 May 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Dalmeny Primary School and Nursery Class
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 worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children 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 how well the school develops leadership skills at all levels. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children in the primary and nursery classes learn and achieve very well. The school has developed a friendly and inclusive environment in which children are happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning. Consequently, children respond positively by showing respect for their teachers and each other. In the nursery, children enjoy exploring and investigating during their play, particularly outdoors. They are making very good progress in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills and enjoy learning about numbers and sounds during songs, games and through playroom routines. For example, staff regularly count with children when baking and measuring, and children enjoy making labels for around the playroom, and menus for their snack. Children love listening to stories, joining in with familiar parts and playing musical instruments in accompaniment. They follow instructions well and speak about their play to adults and each other with increasing confidence. Children were very excited about the baby chicks which had hatched recently and spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically about how they would look after them. At the primary stages, teachers help children to learn in interesting and practical ways in the classroom and through the wider life of the school and community. Consequently, children engage well in their learning, and work respectfully together in pairs and groups, sharing their ideas and opinions. Through productive links with local businesses and community groups, children are developing a strong sense of citizenship and an understanding of the contribution they can make to their community. They take part in joint ventures with the local church and experience success in many sporting and cultural events, quizzes and competitions. These many and varied opportunities extend children's learning and help to build their confidence. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve. They help children to reflect on their work and provide them with helpful feedback on how to improve. This is helping children take an active role in their

learning and to take increasing responsibility for improving their work. With teacher support, children set themselves learning targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. We have asked staff to develop this further, so that these goals are more meaningful to individual children, particularly in health and wellbeing. At all stages, children independently and confidently use a range of information and communication technology for research and to present their work. They use digital media to construct stories, produce a trailer for their school show, and to create animations. This use of laptops, tablets and other technology is motivating and inspiring children and developing useful skills for the future. Teachers use a wide range of assessment information to monitor children's progress. This is helping to ensure children make very good progress in all subjects. Children at the early stages make a strong start with their phonics and numeracy. As they move through the school, children read increasingly difficult texts with fluency and understanding. Children's writing is of a particularly high standard. Because they write in real and meaningful contexts, children confidently adapt the style of their writing to suit different purposes. Scots language is a regular feature of children's learning and those at the middle stages had produced entertaining poems to demonstrate their understanding of Scots verse and vocabulary. In mathematics, children's mental agility is improving because teachers have recently introduced new ways to teach these skills. Because the school ensures children revisit basic mathematical concepts regularly, children make very good progress as they move through the school. Children have a clear understanding of physical and nutritional health and through the Rights Respecting Schools award are learning about children's rights and responsibilities. In other subjects, such as science and expressive arts, children's progress is clear and teachers ensure that children can build on what they already know and can do.

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

In all classes, including the nursery, staff make very effective use of observations and assessments to monitor closely children's progress. This provides them with a very good understanding of children's learning needs. Consequently they are able to plan learning which provides the right level of support and challenge for the wide range of learning needs in their class. Children who need additional support with their learning are supported very well by class teachers. At the upper stages, teachers work alongside colleagues from secondary schools to ensure older children are challenged enough in their learning. Support assistants and the support for learning teacher provide valuable help for a few children who need help to develop their literacy and social skills. The school has fostered a wide range of very productive relationships with colleagues from other agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to provide support for children who need additional help to make progress. Parents are very supportive of the school, including the nursery. They welcome the ways in which the school works with them to share in their child's learning and development. A significant number of dedicated parents volunteer to help in classes and raise funds for the school. In recent years, staff have worked very hard to provide a broad, relevant and challenging curriculum. They have developed clear programmes for all subjects which ensure children make strong progress in all areas of their learning. They have implemented many improvements to teaching and learning so that children's experiences are deep and meaningful. They have begun to look at how children's skills for learning, life and work develop progressively as they move through the school and we have asked staff to continue with this good work.

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

Because there are well-established and effective approaches to gather the views of parents, children and staff, the school has a clear picture of what it does well and a comprehensive plan for how it can improve even further. Children have a strong voice in the school and are able to influence many decisions which affect them. For example, by serving on committees and leading initiatives, they have helped the school achieve accreditation as a Rights Respecting School, and gain a green flag award from Eco-Schools Scotland in recognition of its work on sustainability. Many children give freely of their time and develop their own leadership skills by running successful and well-attended lunchtime clubs or by acting as playground and reading buddies. Successes and achievements are recognised and celebrated widely in school and beyond, contributing to the school's positive reputation in the community. The headteacher provides the school with strong leadership and clear direction. She has successfully led and sensitively managed many changes in the school, bringing about significant improvement, particularly to the curriculum. The principal teacher has a wide remit which she carries out very effectively. She supports the school, particularly the nursery, very well. Her own teaching practice is a strong model for others to follow. Together, the headteacher and the principal teacher offer clear guidance and advice to teachers. This, alongside the commitment of staff to sharing and developing their own practice, is ensuring teaching and learning across the school and nursery are of a consistently high standard. Staff willingly lead developments in school and have worked very productively with colleagues from other local schools to improve the curriculum. The way in which everyone shares responsibility for leading initiatives is commendable and means the school has the capacity to continue to provide a very positive experience for the children of Dalmeny Primary and Nursery.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Happy, polite children who engage well in learning and make very good progress.
- Valuable partnerships within and beyond the school which support children's learning and widen opportunities for achievement.
- The use of information and communication technology to inspire learning and children's confidence in using a wide range of software.
- The progress made in implementing Curriculum for Excellence.
- The clear direction provided by the headteacher and the commitment of staff and children to lead improvements.

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

- Help children to set themselves personal goals for improvement, particularly in health and wellbeing.
- Continue with plans to further enhance the curriculum.

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.

Elaine Merrilees
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/DalmenyPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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. Quality indicators for the nursery class can be found in the publication *Child at the Centre*². 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 Dalmeny Primary School.

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	very good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

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

² *The Child at the Centre (2), Self-Evaluation in the early years*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/Images/catcseey_tcm4-712692.pdf

Please note that the term "adequate" in these documents has been replaced with "satisfactory".