

# Education, Children and Families Committee

## Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 30 November 2015

### Primary School Inspection at St Margaret's RC Primary School

Item number	5.2
Report number	
Wards	Ward 1: Almond

#### Links

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

#### Gillian Tee

Executive Director of Communities and Families

Contact: Janice MacInnes, Quality Improvement Manager (Primary)

E-mail: [janice.macinnes@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:janice.macinnes@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 6268

# Executive summary

## Primary School Inspection at St Margaret's RC Primary 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:

- motivated, well-behaved children who enjoy their learning and are a credit to their school;
- the stronger position the school is now in to take forward Curriculum for Excellence; and
- enthusiastic and well-motivated pupil support assistants who contribute to the life of the school.

## 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>

## Gillian Tee

Executive Director of Communities and Families

## Links

---

<b>Coalition pledges</b>	PO5
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO2
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO3
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Inspection letter to parent/carer
	2. Evaluations

25 August 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**St. Margaret's RC Primary 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 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 the introduction of Spanish and approaches to numeracy and mathematics at the early stages of primary. 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 are friendly, courteous and are keen to discuss their learning when given the opportunity to do so. Children are a real asset to St Margaret's RC Primary School. They enjoy respectful and positive relationships with staff. Their very good behaviour and high levels of respect reflect well the Catholic ethos of the whole school community. Almost all teachers share with children what they want them to learn. Children make positive contributions to lessons and work well together when lessons are motivating and engaging. When given the opportunity, they work well in pairs and small groups. For example, at the early stages children worked very well together when learning numbers. Although still at early stages, children are beginning to plan and make decisions about their learning. However, children are not always sufficiently aware of how to improve their own learning. Staff recognise that there is a need to improve children's awareness of their skills, progress and next steps as learners. More specific feedback and continued work on 'learning targets' would assist children in making more effective progress in their learning. Overall across the school, children's learning experiences are too variable. We have asked the school to ensure that children's learning experiences are of a consistently high standard at all stages. Children are responding positively to taking responsibility and leading aspects of school improvement. For example, running Golden Time clubs for their peers, working with pupils from Dalmeny Primary School to remove litter, and working hard to achieve Eco-Schools Scotland Awards. Children's achievements are celebrated well through newsletters, school displays and assemblies. Children take pride in their achievements and share their successes from within and outwith school. For example, sports reporters were eager to share with us the range of sporting achievements across the school. The school should proceed with plans for using digital technology to celebrate further these achievements and keep parents informed better.

Across the school, children are making good progress in English language and literacy. Recent changes to the teaching of reading and writing are helping to improve attainment and the way children learn in these areas. Teachers still need to have a stronger focus on the direct teaching of specific reading and writing skills and give children clearer guidance about how to improve their work. Most children listen well to their teacher and to each other. They are able to share their views and engage in discussions about a range of topics. Involvement in 'Everyone's an Author' is encouraging children to take greater pride in their writing and showcase their learning in an exhibition. In numeracy and mathematics, children are making appropriate progress. The development of new approaches to teaching numeracy and mathematics at P1 and P2 are beginning to give children a more solid foundation in numeracy skills. These changes and initiatives are still at the early stages and will take more time to bring about an improvement to children's attainment. The school has recently improved the quality of experiences for children in relation to aspects of health and wellbeing. For example, in physical education children now have a better understanding of the skills they are developing.

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

Lessons and activities planned by teachers meet the learning needs of the majority of children. At times, lessons are not challenging enough and the pace of learning is too slow for a significant minority of children. Staff across the school would benefit from more advice on strategies and approaches to meet the learning needs of all children. Many children benefit from having additional support plans to help them learn. The school has clear procedures in place to access specialist help on an outreach basis, but some parents do not feel that this is effective enough. We have asked the school to review the current arrangements for support for learning so that the needs of children who require extra help, particularly those who have significant needs, are met more successfully. Pupil support assistants work effectively with individuals and groups of children to help them make progress. They are held in high regard by the school community and contribute well to supporting the emotional needs of children.

Across the school, staff are now taking more account of national Curriculum for Excellence guidance to improve the range and quality of programmes and learning approaches. They are working well with teachers in surrounding schools to develop the curriculum and share standards. As a result, children have improving opportunities to learn actively and influence what they are learning about in their topic work. The school provides children with a broad curriculum, but it needs to ensure that children's learning is also deep and challenging, and builds more progressively as they move through the school. We have asked the school to build on the positive start made to using the local community as a context for learning. For example, through making more links to the cultural and historical importance of the local areas. The headteacher has given staff helpful guidance to assist them in planning more effective experiences for children so that they can develop their skills and progress in literacy, and numeracy in relevant contexts.

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

The school holds an important place in the village community of South Queensferry. Parents work very well together to raise funds to enhance children's learning through purchasing outdoor equipment and classroom technology. Overall, parents are happy with the school, however, they want better communication and want to be more involved in helping the school recognise what is effective and what needs to improve. All staff show high levels of commitment to improving their work. Staff engage in regular professional dialogue to share ideas and support each other. They value professional learning opportunities and use these to help them drive forward school improvement priorities. We have asked the school to introduce more focused approaches to how they evaluate their work. We acknowledge the headteacher has provided increased focus on improving standards. The headteacher and staff need to continue to work together and with parents and children to bring about sustained improvements.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Motivated, well-behaved children who enjoy their learning and are a credit to their school.
- The stronger position the school is now in to take forward Curriculum for Excellence.
- Enthusiastic and well-motivated pupil support assistants who contribute to the life of the school.

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.

- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure more challenging learning activities and raise attainment for all across the school.
- Improve the curriculum to meet the needs of all children.
- Ensure greater rigour in approaches to self-evaluation to bring about greater consistency of assessment, learning and teaching.

## **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. The City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

Guch Dhillon  
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/StMargaretsPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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](mailto: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?*<sup>1</sup>. 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 St. Margaret's RC Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

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

---

<sup>1</sup> *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](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf)  
Please note that the term "adequate" in the document has been replaced with "satisfactory".