

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 7 March 2016

Primary School Inspection at Nether Currie Primary School

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| Item number | 5.1 |
| Report number | |
| Wards | Ward 2: Pentland Hills |

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Alistair Gaw

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

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Executive summary

Primary School Inspection at Nether Currie 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:

- welcoming and inclusive school;
- confident, capable and happy children; and
- strong teamwork and leadership of staff across 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>

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

1 December 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Nether Currie 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 community links, the development of modern languages and the use of digital technology. 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?

Almost all children are well behaved, motivated and enthusiastic and make good progress in their learning and achievement. Children feel cared for and safe. They have good relationships with each other and with staff in the school. Almost all children feel that staff listen to them and pay attention to what they say. Staff could do more to discuss children's learning with them, helping them to reflect and evaluate and focus on their personal targets. Children enjoy the opportunity to learn using digital technology, particularly in the upper stages of the school, where children have access to individual tablet computers. Children make good contributions to school life and to the wider community. They are able to express their views and influence decision making through a range of groups including the pupil council, the eco school committee and the rights respecting group. They also participate in the local community council and the Muirwood Park group. They enjoy opportunities to participate in a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities, including sports, arts and crafts, chess and gardening, and most children attend at least one of these. The school encourages children to share their achievements and highlights these at assemblies, in the 'hive of achievement' display in the school foyer and in termly newsletters. The school is aware that it now needs to track and monitor children's participation and achievements more effectively to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out and so that teachers can build on the skills which children have already developed.

Across the primary school, almost all children make appropriate progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children are enthusiastic readers and are introduced to an increasingly wide range of texts as they move through the school. In the upper stages they are motivated by opportunities to read widely and can talk

confidently about their favourite authors. Younger children enjoy exploring and playing with sounds and patterns of letters in words, and in later years they are learning to write in a wide range of genres, developing more sophisticated language and punctuation. Older children use tablet computers to create texts in a range of ways including word processing, presentations and animations. Whilst all children benefit from reading and writing opportunities in class, they would also benefit from greater opportunities to engage in talk activities, including evaluation of learning activities. Children are developing their skills and knowledge in mathematics and numeracy, although not as well as in English and literacy, and the school has identified this as an area which needs to be improved. Professional learning opportunities for staff and new resources have been organised to address this issue. Younger children are learning to recognise, name and count numbers within 100. Older children are developing their questioning and thinking skills in mathematics and apply their skills to challenging problems. Across the school, children are developing and applying their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum, such as presentation of data from a rainfall survey. Across the school, children are learning about how to be healthy and keep safe. They understand the benefits of healthy eating and enjoy opportunities to be active outdoors. Children have termly literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing targets in their personal learning plans, which are shared and discussed with parents.

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

The school provides appropriate support for children to develop and learn. However, we have asked the school to ensure that teachers have a clear and shared understanding of what they want children to achieve through the curriculum they provide and that this reflects their local circumstances. The school is successfully developing modern languages provision and all children will have experience of two languages, French and German, by the time they leave school. Across the school, children are benefiting from access to the local environment, such as Muirwood Park, to broaden their learning experiences. The school is aware that there is scope to make even better use of outdoor learning. There are good relationships with a number of community groups, for example the local Rotary Club has helped to judge a 'Dragon's Den' competition. The school is aware that children would benefit from closer working with the local community and partner agencies to review and refresh the curriculum. Interdisciplinary learning opportunities are being developed in the school but staff now need to ensure that these experiences are progressively helping children to develop their knowledge and skills across different aspects of their learning. We have asked the school to continue to review the curriculum, as planned, and to ensure that it takes account of national advice so that children's entitlements are being fully met. There is a good transition from local early learning and childcare centres into primary, including regular opportunities for parents and children to visit the school. We have asked the school to work together with Currie High School to develop learning experiences so that children can move more smoothly from P7 into S1.

Staff mostly take account of the individual needs of children when organising tasks, activities and resources for them. At times the same tasks and activities are set for the whole class and do not take enough account of individual needs. The school is aware that children would benefit from greater differentiation of learning activities and greater pace and challenge, particularly those who could attain more highly. Support staff provide good support for children in their classes and in small groups, including those

with more complex needs. The school also has effective partnerships with other agencies to support children's learning. Staff have benefited from professional learning opportunities on a range of additional support needs to better support children in their classes. Reports for parents are comprehensive and include next steps in their child's learning.

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

The experienced headteacher is a well-respected leader of the school and is particularly appreciated by children, staff, parents and community members for her support and encouragement. The school has strong leadership at all levels and unpromoted staff, including support staff, are responsible for a variety of aspects of school life. Across the school, staff have been observed by the headteacher to evaluate their teaching. We have asked the school to ensure that next steps are always identified to help staff to improve their practice. The headteacher has been involving staff, children and parents in identifying improvement priorities for the school. The school's improvement priorities for the past year have mostly been achieved, including the introduction of new resources for literacy and numeracy, and the setting up of a rights respecting school initiative. The school is aware that it now needs to involve other partners in the evaluation of its work so that their contribution to children's learning is properly planned. We have also asked the school to ensure that planning always leads to improvements in children's learning.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Welcoming and inclusive school.
- Confident, capable and happy children.
- Strong teamwork and leadership of staff across 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.

- Ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Continue to develop the curriculum so that children's entitlements are fully met.
- Ensure that self-evaluation consistently leads to improvements in children's learning.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that most of the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with The City of Edinburgh Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved.

Ken McAra
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/NetherCurriePrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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 Nether Currie Primary School.

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| Improvements in performance | good |
| 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/NetherCurriePrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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".