

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 7 March 2016

Primary School Inspection at Queensferry 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

Alistair Gaw

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

Contact: Janice MacInnes, Quality Improvement Manager (Primary)

E-mail: janice.macinnes@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 6268

Executive summary

Primary School Inspection at Queensferry 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:

- motivate children who are fully engaged with their learning;
- an ethos of aiming high which is resulting in improved attainment and achievement;
- highly effective leadership and strategic vision;
- collegiate approaches to all aspects of school life with strong staff contribution; and

- effective partnership working which enhances the curriculum and support for children.

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>

Alistair Gaw

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

Links

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

26 January 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Queensferry 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 the school's approaches to assessment, the world of work and teaching reading skills through fiction. 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?

In the nursery classes, children are developing their independence through preparing snack and washing dishes, selecting resources and getting ready for going outside. They are motivated and work well together when they build with large construction materials and items from the garden. Children are learning to co-operate and share resources well. They talk confidently to staff about things that interest them and these discussions are recorded in the big floor books. The nursery staff should now consider other ways to allow children to reflect on their learning and think about the new things they have learned. Staff have already identified the need for children to take more ownership of their learning. For example, by giving greater freedom to access the rich learning environments within the garden and middle rooms. Across the school, children are thoughtful and considerate of each other and can talk about the school values. They enjoy very respectful and positive relations with staff and almost all children say that staff encourage them to do their best. Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies and in newsletters. These are also recorded in the children's learning journeys. Children in P7 led a moving and thoughtful remembrance assembly following research into the First World War. Across the school, children enthusiastically gain points for achieving well and contributing to the life of the school. They are motivated to do well in support of their House.

Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in their learning. They are becoming successful, confident learners who increasingly take more responsibility for their learning and show greater independence. In the nursery, children are learning to take responsibility for the environment, feeding the birds in winter and taking care of plants and seedlings. Most children are able to express themselves clearly and hold a conversation with adults and their peers. Children are

able to make marks to represent the written word during play. Some children are writing their names and simple words. Almost all are confident when counting during play. Attractive pictorial displays allow children to recognise written number and shapes. In the primary classes, children support one another very well in pairs and small groups. They enjoy discussions with their teachers about their work. As a result of the strong partnerships developed by the school, and children's involvement in a growing range of out-of-school activities in the local area, the school is held in high regard in its community. Children are developing their leadership skills and understanding of citizenship. They take on a range of responsibilities including serving as P6 and P7 buddies, acting as the recently introduced Queensferry Citizens and leading enterprise projects. Children demonstrate a sense of citizenship and community spirit through their fundraising and support for a variety of charities such as Queensferry Churches Care in the Community and Edinburgh North West Food Bank. The use of novels for reading from P3 upwards has developed an enjoyment of reading in children. They confidently identify and discuss a range of authors and genres they enjoy. A whole school approach to develop children's writing is well-embedded throughout the school. Children use this effectively to describe and improve their writing. Across the school, children have opportunities to work collaboratively on their numeracy and mathematics activities. In P2, children are able to identify examples of symmetry. In P4, children are able to explain how they use tables and tally marks to help them draw bar graphs. By P7, children are confident in a range of ideas and concepts including bearings, scale and time. At all stages, children understand the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle. A stimulating progressive physical education programme and swimming for children in P4 to P6 help to support learning in health and wellbeing. Overall, children are making very good progress in their personal development and learning.

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

Overall, the school's approaches to nurturing, supporting and including all children are very strong. In the nursery, children are treated fairly and with respect by staff who are kind and caring in the way they interact with children. Staff meet children's learning and social and emotional needs very well. In the primary classes, tasks, activities and learning groups are carefully planned to help children achieve success. The headteacher and depute headteacher work very closely with staff, parents and partners ensuring children's additional learning needs are identified early and planned for carefully. The programmes of support and approaches adopted by the staff are well targeted to build the skills and confidence of children who require extra support. Partners speak very positively about their engagement with the school. All talk about the way the school values the support they give to children and how responsive and pro-active the staff are in seeking their advice and professional expertise. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to assess and monitor children's progress in learning. The progress of individual children is tracked accurately and discussed regularly by staff. Collectively, the staff team strives to deliver high-quality education and support to all children and their families.

Staff plan carefully to provide motivating and stimulating learning activities for individual children, small groups and classes. They have developed Curriculum for Excellence programmes which ensure that children are making very good progress in their learning. The curriculum reflects strongly the school in its community. For

example, children in P6 plan, script and present in costume the Queensferry Heritage Trail. The audience consists of younger children, parents, local residents and sometimes tourists. The school takes a strong focus on preparing children for the world of work. Children in P2 visit a local farm to learn about food production. Children in P7 write a personal statement and apply for courses in Forth Valley College. They then have a one day taster of courses which include stone carving and sound production. Children develop their enterprise skills through a range of activities including bake sales and a theatre production. At all stages, classes have broad and rich experiences across the curriculum. Through effective assessment and careful tracking of progress, staff build successfully on children's learning when the children move to new classes at the start of each school session. There are very effective arrangements in place to support children as they start in P1. Staff prepare children in P7 well for their move to Queensferry Community High School.

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

Overall, the school has a very good awareness of its strengths and development needs and has developed effective systems to help it improve. The headteacher and her staff have skilfully built a school community which has high aspirations for the children to achieve the best experience and outcomes. The deputy headteacher and principal teachers are supporting well change and improvement. Teachers are using evaluations well to make improvements. They have termly meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher where they discuss the progress of individuals and groups of children. Teachers have benefited from working together with staff from their own and other schools to improve their practice. Staff are developing a culture where learners are being given a bigger role in school improvement. The school uses a range of strategies to include all stakeholders in improving experiences for children. Through interaction with HM Inspectors, the staff were able to show clear evidence of improvement for children.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the school had one requirement and three recommendations. From this, the requirement and three recommendations have been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no recommendations.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Motivated children who are fully engaged in their learning.
- An ethos of aiming high which is resulting in improved attainment and achievement.
- Highly effective leadership and strategic vision.
- Collegiate approaches to all aspects of school life with strong staff contribution.
- Effective partnership working which enhances the curriculum and support for children.

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

- Continue to develop the curriculum in order to raise further the attainment and achievement of children.

- Increase opportunities for all children in the nursery to take greater responsibility for their learning and to experience challenge.

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, City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Gary Johnstone
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations and national care standards gradings, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/QueensferryPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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.

The Care Inspectorate publishes quality grades to inform people and the Scottish Government about the quality of care services. Awarding grades at inspections is aimed at encouraging providers to identify and address areas for improvement. The Care Inspectorate also uses the grades to ensure its inspection activity is targeted and proportionate. The grades at inspection are awarded against four quality themes, details of which can be found on the Care Inspectorate website.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Queensferry 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	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

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for the nursery class.

Quality of care and support	very good
Quality of environment	very good
Quality of staffing	very good
Quality of management and leadership	very good

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".

Nursery class

At the last inspection that was conducted by the Care Inspectorate, there was one recommendation and three requirements. The recommendation and all three requirements have since been addressed.

A notification from the Care Inspectorate will be sent to the Provider to complete an action plan to address the Requirements and Recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate websites at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/QueensferryPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.asp> and <http://www.scswis.com/>