

# Education, Children and Families Committee

## Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30 pm, Monday, 13 June 2016

### Primary School Inspection at Hillwood Primary School

<b>Item number</b>	5.3
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Wards</b>	Ward 1: Almond Ward 2: Pentland Hills Ward 3: Drumbrae/Gyle

#### Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	PO5
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO2
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO3

#### Alistair Gaw

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# Executive summary

## Primary School Inspection at Hillwood Primary School

### Summary

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- 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

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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 two years of the publication of the inspection letter.

### Measures of success

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The report identified the following key strengths:

- confident and well-behaved children who show a commitment to their school;
- the increasing involvement of parents and the community in the life of the school;
- the quality of children's learning experiences at the upper stages; and
- the reflective leadership of the headteacher in identifying school improvements.

## Financial impact

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There are no financial implications contained in the ES report.

## Equalities impact

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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

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None.

## Consultation and engagement

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

## Background reading / external references

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

## Alistair Gaw

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	PO5
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<b>Appendices</b>	1. Inspection letter to parent/carers 2. Evaluations

19 April 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Hillwood 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 children's awareness of themselves as learners, increasing involvement of parents and the community and aspects of literacy. 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?**

Across the nursery and primary classes, children learn and achieve within a supportive and nurturing environment. In the nursery class, staff are consistently warm and caring and interact positively with children. As a result, most children are happy and settled in their play and cooperate well with each other. They are able to make choices in their play and most are developing some independence in tasks through, for example, helping to cut vegetables for snack. However, children are not yet developing, and applying, the skills they need in order to be fully independent learners. Children have some limited opportunities to discuss what they want to find out about their learning and are beginning to be involved in planning aspects of their own learning. We have discussed with staff the need to give children more opportunities to lead their own learning. Children's learning is enhanced by daily opportunities to be active. They are able to experience fresh air and exercise in a safe and challenging space outdoors. These opportunities promote healthy habits for life and a sense of wellbeing. Across the primary classes, almost all children enjoy their learning experiences. They are gaining in confidence in many positive ways including sharing the work of their action groups with peers at assemblies. Through these groups, children are developing skills for learning life and work, for example writing to local suppliers, coordinating the sale of Fairtrade items and developing international links with a school in Kenya. The quality of children's learning at the upper stages is of a particularly high quality with almost all children knowing themselves very well as learners and taking an active lead in their learning. The 'Hillwood Learning Powers' supports this very well. At the early stages there are several good examples of children discussing their learning. We have discussed with staff how this could be developed further by ensuring children are aware of what they have to do next to

improve their learning. We have asked staff to ensure that children's learning experiences are consistently strong across all classes building, particularly, on the good practice at the upper stages.

In the nursery class, children are making satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and early language skills and skills in mathematics and numeracy across learning. Most children listen well to instructions from staff, to their friends' ideas and to stories at gathering time. A few are beginning to explore and understand the roles of author and illustrator when they share a story with staff. The majority of children recognise familiar letters and a few can sound out familiar words such as their name. Most can recognise their name, for example, when 'signing' in. Overall, children's progress in literacy needs to be improved. Staff should continue to develop challenging and motivating real-life opportunities to apply and develop their skills in new and unfamiliar contexts. In mathematics and numeracy, most children show a keen interest in numbers appropriate to their stage of development. A few count to ten or beyond in their play and can count for a real purpose, for example, when preparing for snack. Through activities such as comparing the length of playdough sausages, children are developing an awareness of size and can use vocabulary such as longer and shorter. Across other areas of the curriculum, children are making satisfactory progress. They are developing their observation skills as they explore the properties of ice in the flower pots and water trays outside. Through celebration of events and festivals such as St Andrew's Day and Diwali children are developing an early awareness of their own and other cultures.

Across the primary classes, most children are making satisfactory progress, or better, in literacy and numeracy. Children listen well to each other and to adults in a range of class and group situations and most are able to answer questions confidently. By P7, children are able to express their views and opinions very well and form a reasoned argument. The majority of children are making a satisfactory start to their reading in the early stages. By P7, almost all children engage well with a wide range of texts. In writing, children's progress is variable. The majority of children in P1 to P3 are starting to write well for a range of purposes. Most older children are able to produce well-structured pieces of writing to express their feelings and support their project work. Across all classes, children would benefit from writing more often with staff agreeing on a common approach to how they mark children's work. Overall, in improving children's literacy, we have discussed with staff the need to increase children's awareness of print at the early stages making links to the nursery class. Overall, in mathematics and numeracy, most children are developing confidence in calculations appropriate to their stage of development. At the early stages, children are able to gather information through simple surveys and present this in a bar graph. Children are able to describe what volume is and how to estimate less, and more than a litre. Older children are developing confidence in using their numeracy skills in practical contexts. For example, in P4/5 they do this well through their finance project and, in P6/7, they apply their skills very confidently when preparing a budget for their 'Scottish Community Café'. By P7, almost all children are showing a strong awareness of fractions and percentages. Staff are aware that in order to improve children's attainment in numeracy, they should continue to develop children's mental agility. Children in the P4/5 class achieve success in learning about the world of work in working with a professional property centre exploring housing in the village and learning about how to produce professional schedules for their own homes. Children

are developing a sound knowledge about health and wellbeing through, for example, finding out about foods grown and produced in Scotland. Older children are developing understanding of the human body and demonstrate this by creating their own 'human body T shirts'. Children are developing a sense of empathy to others through participating in activities such as 'Race for Life' for Cancer Research.

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

There are important strengths in the way the school supports children to learn and develop. Staff provide a supportive and positive ethos that encourages children to be successful in their learning. In the nursery class, staff work hard to plan and devise activities which suit the stage of development and learning style of children. They need now to increase further, levels of challenge and depth in learning, particularly to support the development for older children. Tasks, activities and resources should build more on children's prior learning and support them in achieving next steps in their learning across all areas of the curriculum. In the primary classes, tasks and activities provided by staff are, overall, well judged and meet the needs of most children well. At the upper stages, this is achieved consistently well but in a few lessons in the early years staff should ensure that tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty for children. We have discussed with the headteacher the need to ensure that all children are challenged more in their learning, building on best practise already in the school. Children who may need additional help with their learning have their needs identified very well, are included in classes and have positive relationships with their teachers. Staff work closely with other professionals and partners such as the Educational Psychologist and outreach services to ensure the individual needs of children are supported. Support staff work effectively across the school to help meet the needs of children. Parents give valuable, and increasing, support to the school with the Parent Council taking a strong lead. It is recognised that improved communication from the school, and events such as the 'Community Cafés' run by children, have helped this happen.

The headteacher has worked hard with staff to develop a clear, and understood, direction for the curriculum which the school provides for children. This is now more firmly focused on what is relevant for Hillwood Primary School and Nursery Class. The curriculum is continuing to develop, and improve, in line with national Curriculum for Excellence guidance. Success has been achieved in ensuring there is now a progressive approach to most areas of the curriculum. The school is making good use of the local community and partners to enhance the curriculum. For example, older children visited Pilton Retreat when learning about evacuation as part of their World War 2 project work. Productive links with Edinburgh Airport give children access to additional experiences. Staff are achieving success in developing outdoor learning, as an important part of the curriculum, and should continue with plans in this area. To give the curriculum a greater coherence, we have discussed with staff the need to work more closely across the nursery and early primary classes. Transitions into the nursery class, and into P1, are appropriately managed to ensure that children settle quickly and are secure in their environment. Children benefit from supportive transition activities as they move from P7 to Craigmount High School.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, provides strong leadership and is well respected in the school community. In her relatively short time in post, she has reflected on the school's strengths and what the school needs to do to improve. She has continued to embed an ethos where staff are willing to take on additional responsibility for improving areas of the school. There are a range of successful approaches in place to evaluate the work of the school. These are developing well and have the potential to be developed further. The views of parents are sought and clearly acted upon. Teaching staff share good practice and give each other feedback on visits to other classes. As the school moves forward, it should now build on these developing good practices to ensure consistency in teaching and learning and how the work of the nursery class is evaluated. Staff benefit from valuable support from improvement staff from the City of Edinburgh Council. With this continued support and the reflective leadership of the headteacher, we are confident that the school will continue to improve its work and secure positive outcomes for all children.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the school had no requirements and two recommendations. From these, all recommendations have been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and six recommendations.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Confident and well-behaved children who show a commitment to their school.
- The increasing involvement of parents and the community in the life of the school.
- The quality of children's learning experiences at the upper stages.
- The reflective leadership of the headteacher in identifying school 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.

- Ensure tasks and activities meet the needs of all children consistently well.
- Continue to improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Continue to develop the curriculum, including approaches to monitoring children's progress, giving a clearer focus to the nursery class and early stages.

## **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.

Alan Urquhart  
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/HillwoodPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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>. Quality indicators for the nursery class can be found in the publication *Child at the Centre*<sup>2</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.

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 Hillwood Primary School.

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

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Children's 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 and nursery class.

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

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

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>Quality of environment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	<b>adequate</b>

<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)

<sup>2</sup> *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](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 were two recommendations and no requirements. All recommendations have since been addressed.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The provider should support staff to review and develop planning and floor books to ensure it is responsive to children needs and interests.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 6 – Support and development.
2. The provider should ensure that personal learning plans for children are further developed to ensure that all information relevant to children's wellbeing is recorded. This is especially relevant where children have barriers to their learning or additional support needs. This information should make clear the possible next steps, different opportunities presented or alternative approaches/strategies being used along with regular evaluation of progress made.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 4 – Engaging with children & standard 5 – Quality of experience.
3. The provider should ensure that children are given more opportunities to take responsibility and become more independent in their learning and routine tasks.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 5 – quality of experience.
4. The provider should ensure that outings in the local community are reviewed to ensure the minimum number of adults are available, for the continued safety and wellbeing of children and staff.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Annex A and Standard 3 – Health and wellbeing.
5. We recommend the further development of the quality assurance and monitoring system so that it covers all aspects of the nursery. All staff should be involved to ensure a shared approach. This would ensure that any issues are addressed quickly and support continuous improvement.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 14 – A well-managed service.
6. The provider should ensure all personal care plan information is reviewed whenever the provider is requested to do so by the service user or if there is any significant change in a child's health, welfare or safety needs and at least once in every six month period.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.  
Standard 14: A well-managed service.

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/HillwoodPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.asp> and

[http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489](http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489)