

Sub-Committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.00pm, Tuesday, 5 December 2017

Secondary School Inspection at Portobello High School

Item number	4.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), now part of Education Scotland (ES), undertake an annual sample of inspections across Scotland 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.

The letter (Appendix 1) advises the Sub-committee on the outcomes of the initial inspection of Portobello High School, based on the visit by inspectors in March 2017.

Secondary School Inspection at Portobello High School

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Sub-committee is requested to note the findings in the letter, including, where appropriate, the areas where the education authority and the school should continue to improve the school.

2. Background

- 2.1 In March 2017, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Portobello High School. During this visit, inspectors talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. They gathered evidence to enable them to evaluate the quality of leadership, learning and teaching and young people's attainment and achievements and wellbeing.

3. Main report

Since the report was published, officers have worked closely with the school senior leadership team to support and strengthen improvement activity and note the following progress:

- 3.1 Senior leaders and staff are continuing to show high levels of commitment to making improvements and there is a strong sense of the developing school community, however there is a need to continue to build relationships at all levels. Work has begun, to develop rights based learning through Rights Respecting Schools and to embed the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. The authority has identified partnership schools to support key staff in collaborative learning opportunities to develop this area of improvement. School plans to develop the capacity of middle leaders are in place. A shared vision of the vital role of middle leaders to support school improvement should be developed as part of all capacity building activities.

3.1.1 The culture of teacher leadership is also developing; a series of collegiate sessions to develop learning and teaching have been offered to all staff and will continue to be a key area for improvement, moving forward. Authority-led professional learning in learning and teaching approaches will also be made available and officers will support school senior managers in

self-evaluation activities to ensure progress in this vital area of school improvement. The authority will also support with the development of a culture of teacher-leadership through collaborative practitioner enquiry opportunities.

- 3.1.2 The authority will continue to work closely with the school to ensure that the agenda and pace of change result in improvements in learning for the young people of Portobello High School as detailed in the Inspection report.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team to planning and taking forward school improvement.
- 4.1.1 The school's approaches to supporting young people requiring additional help with their learning. Interventions and strong partnership working are leading to young people feeling included, supported and nurtured. They are progressing well in their learning as a result.
- 4.1.2 The school is beginning to develop a range of learning pathways in the senior phase to support young people in the development of skills for life, learning and work.
- 4.1.3 Young people are attaining well in National Qualifications. Almost all young people move to a positive destination on leaving school.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial implications contained in the ES letter.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 None.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are considered to be no infringements of the rights of the child.
- 7.2 Tracking of pupil performance by gender and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) is undertaken at school level and there are no adverse impacts.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 None.

9. Consultation and engagement

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

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 <https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review>
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/frwk2hgios>

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11. Appendices

1. Portobello Inspection Letter June 2017

27 June 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2017 a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Portobello High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the quality of leadership, learning and teaching and young people's achievements and wellbeing.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team to planning and taking forward school improvement.
- The school's approaches to supporting young people requiring additional help with their learning. Interventions and strong partnership working are leading to young people feeling included, supported and nurtured. They are progressing well in their learning as a result.
- The school is beginning to develop a range of learning pathways in the senior phase to support young people in the development of skills for life, learning and work.
- Young people are attaining well in National Qualifications. Almost all young people move to a positive destination on leaving school.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The City of Edinburgh Council:

- All staff now need to work together to improve the quality and consistency of young people's learning experiences. Staff should build on existing strong practice to provide learning and assessment which supports young people at all stages to make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Continue to improve staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting the wellbeing of all young people. A shared understanding of the importance of positive relationships, high expectations and wellbeing should underpin the school's work to improve young people's learning and achievement.
- Staff should take forward plans to review the curriculum taking into account national advice on the broad general education and the senior phase.

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 quality indicators to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Portobello High School:

Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory

The letter and more detailed summarised inspection findings will be available on the Education Scotland website at <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/edinburgh-city/5533538>.

What happens next?

As part of their ongoing support, officers from The City of Edinburgh Council will carry out a review of the school within 18 months of publication of this letter. Education Scotland will support the council's review of the school. A report will be published informing you of the progress being made by the school. Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit.

Carol McDonald
HM Inspector

¹ How good is our school? (4th Edition) 2015 [How good is our school? \(fourth edition\)](#)

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