

Sub-Committee on Standards for Children & Families

2pm, Tuesday 30 October, 2018

Primary School Inspection at Ratho Primary School

Item number	5.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

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 and evaluations (Appendix 1) and the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2) advises the Sub-committee on the outcomes of the initial inspection.

Primary Inspection of Ratho Primary School

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee is requested to:
- 1.1.1 note the findings of the report including the areas where the education authority and the school should continue to improve the school; and
 - 1.1.2 receive an authority inspection follow through report within two years of the publication of the inspection letter

2. Background

- 2.1 In May 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate visited Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class. During their visit, they talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

3. Main report

- 3.1 During the Inspection, the team found the following strengths in the school's work:-
- Across the school and nursery, children are happy, confident and eager to learn.
 - Staff work very well together and are highly committed to their own professional learning. Staff are encouraged and supported to be creative and innovative.
 - Parents and partners who give freely of their time to participate in school improvement and to ensure the best outcomes for all children.
- 3.2 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The City of Edinburgh Council:-
- Both in the school and the nursery, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for leadership across all staff, parents and children.
 - In the school and nursery, make sure that learning is built from prior experiences. Increase the pace and challenge of learning at all stages, to further meet the needs of all children.
 - Continue to develop and build partnerships with parents and professionals to ensure all children's needs are fully understood and supported.

- Develop a shared understanding with parents, children and staff, of what learning and progression should look like for every child. This curriculum plan should reflect the unique community and context of Ratho Primary School.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Inspectors gathered evidence to enable them to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition) and How good is our early learning and childcare? Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of these evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.
- 4.2 Descriptions of the evaluations are available from How good is our school? (4th edition).
- 4.3 The school also engages in ongoing self-evaluation activity to gather evidence to support their judgements about what is working well and what needs to be improved.

Education Scotland's Gradings for the School and Nursery Class

Quality Indicator	Self Evaluation	Education Scotland Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	4 Good	4 Good
2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment	4 Good	4 Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	4 Good	3 Satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	4 Good	4 Good
Nursery		
1.3 Leadership of Change	4 Good	4 Good
2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	4 Good	3 Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing,	4 Good	4 Good

equality and inclusion		
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	4 Good	4 Good

- As a result of the findings of the Inspection, the team members are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- The City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.
- The City of Edinburgh Council will undertake a follow-through visit to the school and Nursery class within two years of the publication of the Inspection report.

4.4 Progress to Date:-

- The school has created a detailed Action Plan which addresses the action points as set out in the Summarised Inspection Findings. This includes evaluating the Health and Wellbeing curriculum and mapping of new resources to support teaching and learning in this aspect. Other main areas include: - the development of active approaches to teaching and learning which continue to place the child at the centre of learning and develop pupil voice.
- The school's Quality Improvement Education Officers have made visits to the school following the Inspection, to review the school's action and improvement plan and to agree ongoing measures of support.
- There has been an increase in active, outdoor learning opportunities across the school and Nursery, including the development of Forest Kindergarten and Forest Schools approaches.
- There are arrangements in place to ensure that there is regular liaison between members of the Senior Leadership team to implement the activities as defined within the Action Plan.
- There is an ongoing commitment from Senior leaders, and the staff team, to engage in rigorous self-evaluation activity which ensures the gathering of evidence to support progress in the Action Plan.
- The AHT has completed the Performance report for the school and has engaged in Moderation activity with HT colleagues within her Leadership Learning Partnership for Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement.
- The Quality Improvement Education Officer/Early Years Quality Improvement Education Officer will make a joint visit to the school in November to discuss evidence of the impact of the Action Plan and the self-evaluation measures of such.

5. Financial impact

5.1 There are no financial implications contained in the ES report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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

7. Equalities impact

7.1 None

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/reports>

Alistair Gaw

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11. Appendices

- 11.1 Letter to Parents & Carers
11.2 Ratho Primary School, The City of Edinburgh, 18 September, 2018 Summarised Inspection Findings

28 August 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

In May 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- Across the school and nursery, children are happy, confident and eager to learn.
- Staff work very well together and are highly committed to their own professional learning. Staff are encouraged and supported to be creative and innovative.
- Parents and partners who give freely of their time to participate in school improvement and to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

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

- Both in the school and the nursery, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for leadership across all staff, parents and children.
- In the school and nursery, make sure that learning is built from prior experiences. Increase the pace and challenge of learning at all stages, to further meet the needs of all children.
- Continue to develop and build partnerships with parents and professionals to ensure all children's needs are fully understood and supported.
- Develop a shared understanding with parents, children and staff, of what learning and progression should look like for every child. This curriculum plan should reflect the unique community and context of Ratho Primary School.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Ratho Primary School

Quality indicators primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from How good is our school? (4th edition) , Appendix 3: The six-point scale .	

Quality indicators nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale .	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings will be available on the Education Scotland website at <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/edinburgh-city/5540623>.

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The City of Edinburgh Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Ann Floyd
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

28 August 2018

The nursery class is based in a self-contained wing of the main school building. It is registered for 30 children attending at any one time. At the time of inspection there were 60 children on the register. All children have access to 1140 hours through a blended model between nursery and forest kindergarten. Almost all children choose to take up the offer of 1140 hours.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The setting has a shared vision, values and aims that were created with children, parents and community members. There are plans to review and refresh the vision, values and aims on a yearly cycle.
- The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class, however has devolved day-to-day responsibility to the early level principal teacher. The principal teacher leads the setting and shows a strong commitment to her role. The practitioner team have responded well to recent changes in the team and show an enthusiastic and professional approach. Practitioners engage in continuous professional development and this is supporting the setting to adapt to changes in their delivery model.
- Practitioners benefit from a split role between the nursery and forest kindergarten experience, with most reflecting positively on the newly implemented pilot approach. Outdoor learning, family learning and responsive planning are some responsibilities currently led by early years practitioners. Leadership at all levels is at the early stages and practitioners would benefit from increased opportunities over time.
- The school improvement plan contains appropriate priorities for the nursery. Opportunities for practitioners to develop their skills and responsibility in taking forward improvement plan priorities are evident in practice. Change should be planned sensitively to balance implementing new thinking whilst retaining high quality experiences for children.
- The setting has made a positive start to self-evaluation with a focus on literacy, numeracy and technologies. The use of national frameworks to support self-evaluation is at the early stages and the team would benefit from further engagement with How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC?). To ensure children continue to benefit from their experience of 1140 hours, the setting should develop their processes to evaluate what is working well and what needs to improve across the blended delivery model.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships between children and practitioners are positive and nurturing. As a result, children are happy, safe and secure and are developing confidence within the setting. The majority of children are engaged and enjoy learning through free play, particularly in the outdoor environment. They are forming friendships and a majority are learning to play cooperatively with others. There is scope for almost all children to be more challenged as they learn through play. Practitioners should ensure they are building on prior learning and extending children's ability at an appropriately challenging pace.
- Children independently make choices from the available resources, however they could be better supported and encouraged to care for their learning environment. Older children are motivated by the rich and challenging experiences provided during Forest Kindergarten. These sessions allow them to take risks, problem solve and develop resilience. Practitioners should now review the structure and pace of the day to ensure all children have sufficient time to lead their learning, to follow their own interests and become fully engaged in play experiences.
- Practitioners are caring and supportive in their interactions. Most know children well as learners and have an understanding of their likes, dislikes and development needs. Most practitioners engage appropriately with children during play and support them by giving praise and encouragement. On a few occasions interactions could be used more effectively to support and encourage children's concentration and engagement.
- The majority of practitioners use effective open-ended questions to support and extend children's thinking, however there is scope to consider the overall quality and consistency of questioning.
- Children have planned experiences to explore digital technologies. Practitioners should now continue to develop and extend how they use digital technologies to support children's learning.
- Practitioners observe children as they play and learn and these observations support the assessment process. There is scope to develop the role of the key worker further to ensure observations of significant learning are used to inform next steps. Children have individual folders that contain samples of art work. We discussed the benefits of adding dates and comments from both adults and children to highlight and value children's achievements.

- Electronic journals are used to record children’s learning and development. Email alerts are sent when new observations are added, allowing parents to comment on their child’s experiences and progress. Further development of the key worker system will enable the electronic journals to become more personalised. Children have limited opportunities to contribute to their journal. We discussed with practitioners ways in which they can ensure children have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- Practitioners plan for learning across all areas using their knowledge of the curriculum and children’s current interests. A planning board is used to gather and display observations of children’s experiences. Practitioners meet weekly to discuss children’s learning and a selection of observations and photographs are added to a floor book to document children’s experiences. Mind maps are also displayed, however these should be more interactive and visible to children.
- The principal teacher records coverage of early level experiences and outcomes to ensure children experience a broad range of opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners should now review long and short term planning to ensure processes are more responsive and flexible and children have meaningful involvement. The principal teacher has developed a recording system to track children’s progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Practitioners working with children in the forest kindergarten are continuing to develop effective and manageable ways to plan and track children’s learning and development across both settings.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The curriculum framework is based on play and takes good account of Curriculum for Excellence. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Practitioners have a shared understanding of their role in supporting children's learning and development in these areas.
- Home visits support children and families as they join the setting and practitioners gather a range of useful information to ensure a smooth transition. A range of effective activities including shared primary one experiences, playground visits and a buddy system support transition into school. Practitioners working across the early level have developed progression frameworks for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and this supports continuity of learning as children move onto school.
- Outdoor learning experiences, particularly forest kindergarten, are enriching the curriculum. Children are learning about the seasons and have very good opportunities to explore the natural environment. Engaging and relevant experiences support and encourage children to practice skills and develop curiosity and imagination. Children are given time to explore and investigate natural materials and open-ended resources. We discussed ways of embedding these challenging opportunities to ensure they become a key feature of both settings.
- Early level practitioners and teachers share a yearly overview, which gives a framework of 'themes' to be covered throughout the session. This aims to support progression of learning across the early level. They should now develop further their shared approaches to curriculum planning. There is scope for planning to be more responsive to children's interests to ensure children are appropriately challenged in their learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Regular opportunities to engage in the life of the setting are available, for example, monthly Monday and Wednesday stay and play sessions. There is a notice board at the nursery entrance that shares information about the week ahead. Parents who responded to inspection questionnaires were very positive about their child's experience at Ratho Nursery.
- Partnerships with local health professionals are supporting positive outcomes for children and families. Visits to the local library, the Bridge Inn and the local farm support children to understand the world of work in their local community. As part of pre-admission to nursery, parents and children can attend family learning sessions in the community wing.
- An open door policy, parents meetings and social media support regular communication with parents. Parents have logins for the electronic journals and a few are posting comments on their child's learning.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Relationships across the setting are built upon mutual respect and trust leading to a welcoming and friendly ethos for all children and parents. Practitioners know individual children very well which ensures continuity in their care and learning. Children readily approach practitioners for help and support when needed. Overall, most children's behaviour is observed to be positive in line with their age and stage of development. Practitioners should continue to promote positive behaviour and positive relationships.
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the use of the national wellbeing indicators are evident in floorbooks and are displayed on the Wellbeing/Achievement tree. Parents are contributing to the tree with comments from home and the wider community. Children are developing a shared understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Continuing to promote the language of wellbeing across the setting will help to support positive outcomes for children and families.
- Practitioners listen to what children say and respond through daily dialogue and responsive planning. They should now continue to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for consultation with children. Opportunities for children to plan, lead and reflect upon their learning would help strengthen children's voice in the setting.
- Children are observed to be happy and confident as they free flow between indoors and outdoors. Outdoor learning in the garden supports children to be healthy and active as they take risks climbing the large chute, balance on planks of wood and have fun with their peers. A blended model with the forest kindergarten is supporting most children to develop confidence and resilience, impacting positively on their sense of wellbeing.
- Children enjoy a healthy snack in the setting and contribute to the creation of the weekly menu, for example, making garlic bread with the fresh garlic collected in the forest. They are developing their personal hygiene skills and increasingly dress themselves for outdoors. Practitioners should continue to develop opportunities for children to take a leadership role, for example, risk assessing outdoors or preparing and serving snack.
- Overall, statutory duties are engaged and complied with. There is a clear understanding of what is required of practitioners and management in their requirement to fulfil statutory duties to secure positive outcomes for children.

- Children's individual needs are responded to in a kind and caring manner. Children who face barriers to their learning, have individual plans in place in consultation with parents and other agencies where appropriate. Early identification and effective multi-agency working is supporting children and parents to achieve positive outcomes.
- Equality and diversity is celebrated, with all children and parents treated with respect in a fair and just manner. Practitioners should continue to explore how they can engage children and parents in relevant learning about equality and diversity.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Overall most children are making good progress in communication and early language in line with their age and stage of development. Children listen well to stories and respond appropriately to related questions. They converse confidently as they play and demonstrate a wide use of vocabulary. Children explore books independently across the learning environment and are encouraged to take home a story for bedtime. Opportunities for mark making and drawing are available in the setting and forest environment with a few children are observed writing their name outdoors. There is scope for children to be encouraged to express themselves for real life purposes for example, 'writing' their own names on their work.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics with most counting confidently to ten in routines and when exploring natural and open-ended resources. Most children are observed to recognise colour and shape in their environment. Children discuss length and measurement, for example, in the forest as they compare branch lengths. Opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills are provided across the setting. There is room to extend the use of open-ended resources to challenge those who need it and encourage counting bigger numbers.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing an understanding of feeling healthy and active as they develop their physical skills outdoors. They enjoy a range of healthy snacks and lunch in the forest. Children have an awareness of personal hygiene as they spend an extended period of time in the forest. Children are observed increasingly taking risks as they use rope swings, climb trees and use real tools for woodwork.
- Overall, children in the setting are enthusiastic learners who are making good progress. They are learning to share and most are kind and considerate towards each other. We discussed with practitioners that in addition to the good work already in place, there is now scope to promote more challenge and depth across learning to enhance progression for all children. Practitioners also need to encourage children to talk about their learning and the skills they are acquiring.
- Children's individual achievements from home and nursery are captured and celebrated. Practitioners use feedback and praise well to promote positive attitudes, encouraging effective cooperation and independence. Parents are kept informed about their individual child's

progress both formally and informally. Electronic journals are used to capture children's progress and recent observations captured in the forest are making journals more personal to individual children.

- Equity is promoted across almost all aspects of the work of the setting. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos, as a result there is a climate of mutual respect and trust. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to effective learning for all children. Moving forward there is a need to continue to monitor the uptake and accessibility of the additional activities offered throughout the core hours of the day.

Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
 - Role of practitioners and leaders
 - Identification of learning needs and targeted support
 - Removal of barriers to learning
-
- Children and parents benefit from positive relationships with practitioners and the settings engagement with local health professionals. Home visits and family learning classes help children and parents to develop positive relationships before starting nursery. There is a key worker system which could be embedded further allowing practitioners the opportunity to contribute more to individual children's learning journals.
 - Children's interests are being taken into consideration as part of the continued engagement with responsive planning. Developing meaningful learner conversations would support children further to make very good progress in their learning.
 - Children frequently engage in experiences that develop their independence and confidence. For example, risk taking outdoors. The setting work closely with parents and partner agencies to ensure early identification of needs are monitored and addressed in a timely manner. The setting provides an inclusive, nurturing learning environment.
 - Children lead their own play and learning from the range of resources that are freely available. This supports them to sustain interest and concentration, with a few for longer periods of time. Practitioners are aware of the benefits from uninterrupted play and this is working well for the majority of children. There is a need to continue to develop this approach through monitoring the engagement levels of all children. There are missed opportunities where a child's learning could be extended further through adult intervention either during or after a child initiated play experience.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.