

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2 pm, Monday, 10 February 2014

Primary School Inspection at Abbeyhill Primary School and Nursery Class

Item number	4.2
Report number	
Wards	Ward 11: City Centre Ward 12: Leith Walk Ward 14: Craigtinny/Duddingston

Links

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive summary

Primary School Inspection at Abbeyhill 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 the nursery class; and
- receive an authority inspection follow through report.

Measures of success

The report identified the following key strengths:

- the supportive environment for learning provided by staff;
- children's enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning;
- relationships among staff and children; and
- leadership of the acting headteacher and acting principal teacher.

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

26 November 2013

Appendix 1

Dear Parent/Carer

**Abbeyhill 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 how supportive and inclusive the school is, how well children develop their skills in writing and the improving quality of teaching and learning. 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?

Children in the nursery are happy and comfortable in the playroom and are developing positive relationships with each other. They are improving their skills at playing together, sharing toys and taking turns. They are aware of nursery routines and rules. They approach their play activities enthusiastically and a few can concentrate on tasks for extended periods. Children enjoy finding out about conkers and discovering the best way to open them. At all stages in the primary school, children enjoy their learning. They like their teachers and share mutual respect with staff. Children are motivated and enthusiastic about learning and engage well with the tasks and activities in their lessons. They cooperate well and collaborate readily with other children in their class. They benefit from the way in which teachers regularly share what is to be learned, and how children will know if they have been successful. Children need to receive more specific feedback from teachers to enable them to set more challenging targets. Older children accept readily responsibilities to support younger children in the nursery. They take on leadership roles in the pupil council, eco group and as Junior Road Safety Officers. More children can benefit from a wider range of responsibilities across the school.

In the nursery, children are developing skills at forming letters at the writing table and a few can write their name. They enjoy sharing their writing with adults. In the primary classes, children at the early stages are making good progress in English language and literacy, mathematics and numeracy. However, at the upper stages, some children can make better progress. Across the school, children are confident when talking to peers and adults. They listen and discuss in pairs and groups to good effect. At P2, children can organise vocabulary in alphabetical order and children in P4 can

identify features of language such as figures of speech and use these effectively to write poetry. Children are improving their knowledge about language and aspects of their skills in writing. However, they now need to write at length for different purposes more often. Children in the nursery are becoming increasingly aware of the seasons and can talk about changes in the weather. They enjoy finding out about tree seedlings and leaf fall during autumn. At P5/P6, all children are able to identify real-life uses of negative numbers. At P7, all children are able to show understanding of different ways of using money to exchange value. Across the school, children would benefit from continued practice in numeracy and a clearer focus on the progression of skills as they go through the school. Across the school, children's mental, social and emotional wellbeing is promoted through programmes and focus weeks to improve confidence. At all stages, children are motivated by their topic work. They can describe features of the work of Scottish artists including Peploe and Dudley D. Watkins when exhibiting their artwork in the school as part of the 'Colony of Artists' community arts project.

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

Staff have created a supportive, caring ethos throughout the school. Overall, classroom lessons and practical activities are set at the right level of challenge for most children. In best practice, teachers use a wide range of different approaches to meet children's needs. A few children would benefit from greater levels of challenge and the scope to progress at a faster pace. The support for learning teacher and support assistants provide children with positive support in classes to learn effectively alongside their peers. The school works well with a range of outside professionals to support learning. Staff are working well together to ensure children gain from Curriculum for Excellence. In the nursery, the curriculum offers children a broad range of learning experiences which promote enjoyment and choice through play. Children would benefit from increased opportunities for personal achievement across the school. Staff give good attention to developing children's thinking skills. We have asked the school to improve teaching programmes for science and modern languages to ensure children make suitable progress in these areas. Overall, arrangements for children at transition points are well organised. The headteacher should now provide clearer direction to staff in linking together changes to the curriculum including advice on more effective timetabling arrangements to promote children's progress.

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

The acting headteacher has led the school well in making a good start to ensure it has a clear understanding of what it does well and what needs to be improved to make a difference to children's progress and achievements. She has surveyed the views of parents, staff and children. She is working with the parent council to engage parents and other partners more effectively in improving the school further. Together with staff, the acting headteacher and acting principal teacher have identified that the school now needs to improve further the system to monitor and track children's progress and achievements.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The supportive environment for learning provided by staff.
- Children's enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning.
- Relationships among staff and children.
- Leadership of the acting headteacher and acting principal teacher.

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

- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure more challenging learning activities and raise achievement for all across the school.
- Continue to develop the curriculum by reviewing and linking together recent changes.
- Extend the use of evidence drawn from self-evaluation to improve children's learning and achievement.

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 evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with the school and Edinburgh City Council in order to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

David Watt
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/AbbeyhillPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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.

Here are the evaluations for Abbeyhill Primary School.

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/AbbeyhillPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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.

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/catcseeey_tcm4-712692.pdf. Please note that the term "adequate" in these documents has been replaced with "satisfactory".