

Education, Children and Families Committee

Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2 pm, Monday, 10 February 2014

Primary School Inspection at St Peter's RC Primary School and Nursery Class

Item number	4.4
Report number	
Wards	Ward 10: Meadows/Morningside Ward 8: Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward 9: Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart Ward 11: City Centre Ward 15: Southside/Newington Ward 16: Liberton/Gilmerton

Links

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

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Executive summary

Primary School Inspection at St Peter's RC 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 high quality of children's learning and achievement in the nursery;
- parent helpers supporting children's learning;
- children who are confident, eager to learn and participate in life of the school;
- the inclusive ethos built on faith values; and
- leadership at all levels to improve children's learning experiences.

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

**St Peter's RC 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 effectively the school works with children to plan their learning and uses tracking and monitoring processes to improve children's performance. We also looked how parent helpers work with the school to enhance children's 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?

Across the nursery and the primary stages, children are confident, very well behaved and enjoy their learning. In the nursery, many children focus very well on their learning, wait patiently for their turn and share resources and equipment. Almost all choose independently what they want to play with and use materials very well, including in the outdoor play area and garden. Children's learning is of a very high-quality during 'free-flow time' when they operate individually, in pairs and in small groups. At the primary stages, most children are actively engaged in their learning and work hard to do well. Most children contribute confidently to lessons and discussions and work effectively in groups and individually. In some lessons, children have opportunities to demonstrate their leadership and research skills, for example when presenting their work to others. In the best lessons, children are taking responsibility for their own learning and are becoming independent learners. Children need to experience these high quality learning experiences more often across all areas of their learning and at all stages. The pace in lessons could be brisker for most children.

In the nursery and at the primary stages, children are achieving very well. For example, children have a sound understanding about the reasons for saving money as a result of the school's 'Financial Education' week. In the nursery, they are developing important early skills in citizenship, enterprise and sustainability very effectively. Almost all children apply literacy and numeracy skills extremely well across different aspects of their learning and are making excellent progress. Children who have English as an additional language and their parents are supported very effectively in their learning of English. At the primary stages, children participate enthusiastically in a variety of out of school hours clubs, such as the choir and hockey. Children confidently take on leadership roles, for example when organising 'The Lion King'

school show. They are leading school committees successfully, for example the Pupil Council and Enterprise in Education. These and other learning activities contribute effectively to the school's inclusive ethos. Across the primary stages, children use their reading, writing and mathematical skills effectively. For example when producing posters related to 'Endangered Species' as part of their science work. Children should have further opportunities to write and talk about their reading. Similarly, the school should continue to show children how their mathematical skills relate to real-life situations. Children have produced varied and imaginative works of art based on the work of famous artists such as Kandinsky and Warhol. Children use their information and communications technology (ICT) skills very well to enhance their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

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

In the nursery, staff support children to develop and learn very well. They plan a range of relevant activities and support children who need additional help or challenge with their learning very effectively. They meet children's individual circumstances and needs very well and provide a very high level of care and encouragement. They intervene sensitively and swiftly to support individual children in their play and learning where necessary. At the primary stages, in most lessons teachers plan tasks and activities effectively to meet the individual need of learners. Tasks and activities could be further differentiated and more challenging for most children. Children requiring additional help in their learning are supported effectively by the learning support staff, pupil support assistants and partner agencies. Parents support children's learning in school very well and in many ways, for example sharing their expertise and talents. Across the nursery and primary stages, staff are working confidently with Curriculum for Excellence. They are updating areas of the curriculum regularly. Nursery staff and teachers involve children in planning aspects of their learning, identifying prior knowledge and areas of interest they would like to explore further. At the primary stages, the school has introduced a new literacy programme to further develop children's literacy skills. Across the school, children's learning is enhanced by guest speakers, educational visits and residential experiences, such as Benmore. As a result, children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. The school should continue to ensure progression of children's knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum. Children are very well supported as they move from nursery to P1 and from P7 to St Thomas of Aquins. The school should continue to develop its curricular links with St Thomas of Aquins.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision of providing children with the best learning experiences that the school can offer. In the short time since her appointment, she has successfully ensured improvements related to children's learning in a thoughtful and caring manner. The depute headteachers have worked successfully with teachers and other staff to develop many areas of the curriculum, for example ICT and leading the nursery team. Together, as a senior management team, they visit the nursery and primary classes regularly to monitor teaching and learning and provide staff with helpful feedback to improve. All staff take on leadership roles to improve children's learning experiences, such as teachers leading curricular developments. Nursery staff and teachers reflect on their practice and discuss with the senior management team and each other about how their practice could be improved. In many classes, children use self and peer-assessment well. The

school tracks and monitors children's performance effectively, using a range of approaches to ensure that they are making appropriate progress in their learning. The school should continue to ensure that the outcomes of its self-evaluation processes are monitored and reviewed systematically. This will help the school to plan improvements more purposefully and inform children's future learning. Parents are regularly consulted through the Parent Council and at school events and their comments are used to improve the school.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The high quality of children's learning and achievement in the nursery.
- Parent helpers supporting children's learning.
- Children who are confident, eager to learn and participate in life of the school.
- The inclusive ethos built on faith values.
- Leadership at all levels to improve children's learning experiences.

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.

- Continue to use self-evaluation approaches to improve the quality of children's learning.
- Continue to develop the curriculum.
- Continue to develop high quality learning and teaching across the primary 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 evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects 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 and share more widely the innovative practice.

Hakim Din
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/StPetersPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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 St Peter's RC Primary School and Nursery Class.

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	good
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/StPetersPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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".