

# Education, Children and Families Committee

## Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families

2.30pm, Monday 8 September 2014

### Primary School Inspection at James Gillespie's Primary School and Nursery Class

Item number	5.2
Report number	
Wards	Ward 10: Meadows/Morningside Ward 15: Southside/Newington

#### Links

---

Coalition pledges	PO5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

#### Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Contact: Karen Prophet, Senior Education Manager (Schools, Quality and Curriculum)

E-mail: [Karen.prophet@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.prophet@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 469 3048

# Executive summary

## Primary School Inspection at James Gillespie's 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
- receive an authority inspection follow through report.

### Measures of success

---

The report identified the following key strengths:

- confident, articulate, well-mannered children who are ambitious to achieve and proud of their school;
- the quality of children's attainment in writing;
- the high quality of teaching across the primary stages; and
- how well all staff work together to improve the school.

## 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>

## Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

## Links

---

<b>Coalition pledges</b>	PO5
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO2
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO3
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Inspection letter to parent/carer
	2. Evaluations

24 June 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**James Gillespie's 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 the 'Growing Confidence' project, children's engagement in their learning, and how staff assess and track children's progress. 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 motivated by the activities in the playroom. They engage confidently in their play, and most can carry out routine tasks such as putting on coats and preparing snacks independently. Children cooperate well, and most show a mature awareness of the feelings and needs of others. There are positive and nurturing relationships between children and staff. We have asked staff to give children more responsibility and encourage them to make decisions, design activities and solve problems by themselves. We were impressed by how confident, articulate and engaging the children are at the primary stages. They are very well behaved and clearly committed to learning. They set themselves high standards and work hard to achieve these. Children enjoy lessons because the tasks they are given are active and engaging. They are good at taking responsibility for their own learning. They are also skilled at working together to solve problems by thinking creatively and analytically. They clearly understand the purpose and application of their learning and what successful achievement looks like. They showcase their learning in many ways including popular class 'shows' for parents and the community.

Many of the children come in to nursery with well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy. They are confident communicators and several have a very well-developed vocabulary for their age. Almost all are good at listening to and talking about stories and many are beginning to write. Most of the pre-school children count confidently and use money appropriately in play. Staff in the nursery need to ensure that they plan learning opportunities which build effectively on this strong early achievement. At the primary stages, the school supports and

encourages children's achievement and helps them to develop their skills. The choir performs at prestigious events around the city. Many children play musical instruments or competitive sports to a high standard. All children participate in special school events such as science week, citizenship week, enterprise activities and Scots Language and Culture fortnight. Older children are developing leadership skills by supporting younger pupils and acting as role models. The 'Growing Confidence' initiative has had a positive impact on children's ability to tackle problems and persevere when facing challenges. At all stages, children are making strong progress in their learning in English and mathematics. Their use of vocabulary and literary techniques to create effective writing is of a particularly high standard. Children carry out mental calculations quickly and accurately, but need more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills, including interpreting and presenting information, in real-life contexts. By P7, children play a range of games and sports, competently analysing their performance. They are also good at thinking and working scientifically. Children use information and communications technology skilfully as part of their learning.

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

Children in the nursery are safe and well cared for. A 'key worker' system has helped staff to learn more about the individual children for whom they are responsible. Staff take some account of children's interests when planning learning activities. They now need to observe and engage with children during play. They should use their observations to plan learning opportunities which support and challenge all children. We have advised staff to plan individually for children who require additional support with their learning. Children with English as an additional language need to be better supported with appropriate resources. Primary class teachers are responsive to their pupils' learning needs. Senior managers meet class teachers regularly to review children's learning. This is a very good way of ensuring that all children are making progress with appropriate support. Teachers design lessons to engage and interest the children. Along with support staff, they meet children's needs well in lessons. We have asked the school to give the Support for Learning team a clearer role and purpose. In particular, the school needs to evaluate the impact on children of extracting them from class, to ensure their needs are met.

Staff have begun to improve play areas in the new nursery. They have designed outdoor learning experiences for children to develop their skills across a range of curriculum areas. This work needs to be continued throughout the nursery to ensure that activities offer children opportunities to learn and build on their existing skills. The P1 teacher visits nursery to get to know children so that she can plan for their learning. Teachers at the primary stages have been developing Curriculum for Excellence over a number of years and are continuing to do so. They plan children's learning thoroughly. They use assessment and tracking of what children know and can do, and agreed programmes to ensure that children develop skills progressively over time. Staff should consider updating some topics to give more attention to the local area and current affairs.

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

There have been significant improvements in the nursery over the last year. The environment for learning has improved with the move to the new building. Children have many more learning activities on offer. Leadership in the nursery is being supported by a seconded local nursery headteacher. Senior managers have agreed priorities for improving the nursery, and are working closely with staff to develop their capacity for making further improvement. Primary children take responsibility for leading improvements in the school. Parents' views are sought regularly and working parties from the Parent Council work closely with the headteacher. Parents and children are keen to become even more involved in driving change. Staff are highly committed to improvement. They carry out rigorous self-evaluation to improve their teaching and children's learning. The extent to which staff share their skills and support one another is impressive. The headteacher gives staff clear direction with effective leadership of improvement. She has commendably focused her attention on implementing Curriculum for Excellence and improving teaching and learning. At present, she needs to be better supported by administrative systems so she can focus on leading learning and teaching across the school. Two deputy headteachers support the headteacher effectively. Overall, James Gillespie's Primary School is a happy and caring school which provides high-quality learning experiences, and where children achieve high standards. It would benefit from continued support and advice from the City of Edinburgh Council to improve the nursery.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Confident, articulate, well-mannered children who are ambitious to achieve and proud of their school.
- The quality of children's attainment in writing.
- The high quality of teaching across the primary stages.
- How well all staff work together to improve the school.

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

- Continue with plans to develop children's skills across the curriculum.
- Improve management of information and communication systems to allow staff to focus on learning and teaching across the school.
- Continue to improve children's learning experiences in the nursery.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection of the nursery class, the school had five requirements and ten recommendations. From these, two requirements and four recommendations have been met. Outstanding issues relating to care and support, staffing and management and leadership are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two requirements and five recommendations.

## **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that most of the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with the City of Edinburgh Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved.

Jacqueline Sinclair  
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/JamesGillespiesPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.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 James Gillespie's Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very 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.

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>Quality of environment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	<b>adequate</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".



During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the nursery had five requirements and ten recommendations. From these, two requirements and five recommendations have been met.

The outstanding issues relating to care and support, staffing and management and leadership are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two requirements and four recommendations.

## **Requirements**

1 The provider must evidence that:

- Staff have received guidance and are clear about the purpose of learning stories.
- Learning outcomes are identified for each child.
- Parents and children are involved in setting next steps in learning.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSI) 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Health and welfare and safety of service users. We have also taken into account the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 4 – engaging with children.

2 The provider must ensure that:

- They review the current ‘behaviour management’ strategy to ensure staff promote positive behaviour and treat all children fairly and with respect.
- Children with language barriers are supported through staff understanding of their needs and their responsibility to meet these.
- Staff are able to meet the needs of all children through positive interaction in a quality learning environment that challenges and extends children’s learning.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSI) 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Health and welfare and safety of service users. We have also taken into account the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 4 – Engaging with children. Standard 5 – Quality of experience. Standard 6 – Support and development.

## **Recommendations**

1 It is recommended that parents are given further opportunities to help and contribute to the life of the nursery. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 7 – A caring environment.

2 It is recommended that the service makes effective use of the resources and facilities in the community. They should explore ways that children can contribute to the life in the community. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 9 – Involving the community.

3 It is recommended that staff receive training to ensure they are up to date with current best practice to deliver a quality, challenging, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. The manager should then monitor effectively the quality of work of each member of staff and evaluate how effective their practice is in meeting the

needs of the children. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 13 – Improving the service.

4 It is recommended that the manager develops quality assurance systems to monitor the quality of the service as a whole. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 14 – 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/JamesGillespiesPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.asp> and  
[http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489](http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489)