

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 27 April 2023

## Quality Improvement and Scrutiny Update

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Note the purpose and learning points from Education Scotland and Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) scrutiny activity.
  - 1.1.2 Note the strengths and areas for improvement identified through internal supported self-evaluation activity.
  - 1.1.3 Agree next steps at 5.1 – 5.3

**Amanda Hatton**

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Jackie Reid, Acting Senior Education Manager

E-mail: [Jackie.Reid2@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Jackie.Reid2@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## Quality Improvement and Scrutiny Update

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report covers a range of activity from Education Scotland scrutiny to local authority reviews. Our main conclusions are that, while there is some outstanding and sector leading performance, more work needs to take place to ensure consistency of practice in learning and teaching and raising attainment, tracking and monitoring of attainment and achievement.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Education Scotland has inspected The Royal High School using the full model of inspection. This evaluates the four key Quality Indicators from the Performance Framework How Good Is Our School? 4 (See background reading) :-

- 1.3 Leadership of Change
- 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment
- 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
- 3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement

The QICS provided intensive support to ensure that the school was well prepared for their inspection including ensuring high confidence levels in the school's self-evaluation grades for these core Quality Indicators.

- 3.2 The Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) undertakes follow-through visits in accordance with the following cycle: -
- Within 1 year of inspection where a school has been externally validated as "satisfactory" or less in any of the core Quality Indicators (1.3 Leadership of Change, 2.3 Teaching, learning & assessment, 3.1 Health, wellbeing & resilience, 3.2. Raising attainment & achievement)
  - Within 18 months of inspection for all other schools
- 3.3 The QICS plan for supported self-evaluation processes for schools, who may be in the cycle for inspection, is now well re-established. The main factor in identifying these schools is the length of time since they were last inspected; information which is held in the Capacity & Risk Register. These groups of schools have received targeted pre-inspection support including detailed guidance on the process of, and preparation for, inspection.

## 4. Main report

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### 4.1 Education Scotland Inspections

#### The Royal High School

In December 2022, Education Scotland inspectors visited The Royal High School undertaking a full model inspection. Here are Education Scotland's evaluations:-

#### School

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Excellent
2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Very Good
3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion	Excellent
3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement	Very Good

The letter issued to parents & carers (report), identifying strengths and next steps is attached as Appendix 1. The link to the more detailed full summarised inspection findings, is detailed in the letter (report) and referenced below as background reading. Areas of practice within the school have been identified as outstanding. This includes the leadership of the head teacher, wider leadership team and the exceptional contribution made by young people to the leadership of school improvements. The school's approaches to equalities and equity have been identified as worthy of sharing at National level with digital approaches identified as a feature of highly effective practice.

### 4.2 Follow-Through Visits

#### Dalry Primary School

In May 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Dalry Primary School and Nursery Class. Please note that, at this time, the team evaluated alternative quality indicators. Here are Education Scotland's evaluations:-

#### School

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Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good
3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement	Good

#### Nursery

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Satisfactory
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Good

Here are the Care Inspectorate gradings for the nursery class:-

Care Inspectorate Standard	Evaluation
Quality of care and support	Very good
Quality of environment	Very good
Quality of staffing	Good
Quality of management and leadership	Good

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

- Staff know the children and families well. The school promotes diversity, and creates a welcoming and friendly environment. Relationships are respectful between adults and children. School leaders consult well and give good direction to the staff team who are very supportive of each other.
- Almost all children are motivated to learn and engage well with the enriching and wide range of learning experiences available to them. Children are supported to learn and make good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The active parent council and wide range of partners work together with staff effectively to support families and their children.

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

- Across the school, continue to develop opportunities to involve children more in decisions about their learning, and support them to have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve further.
- Engage further in opportunities for staff to work together with other colleagues within and beyond the school, sharing best practice. Continue to review the effectiveness of the wide range of interventions in place to further raise attainment and achievement for all children.
- Practitioners in the nursery class should develop further their <sup>4</sup>early work to ensure all activities are challenging and build on children's prior learning across the early level.

The cessation of scrutiny activity, during the Covid pandemic, prevented a follow-through visit being undertaken within the normal cycle. In February 2023, a team of Quality Improvement Education Officers from The City of Edinburgh Council, representing the nursery and primary sectors, visited Dalry Primary School and Nursery Class.

The findings evidence that Dalry Primary School and Nursery had made appropriate progress in all three areas highlighted by Education Scotland in 2018. Strengths and next steps are detailed in the report. (Appendix 2). The Quality Improvement Education Officers for the school and the nursery will continue to work with the Head Teacher to provide support and to challenge progress across the school and this will continue to be reported to parents & carers through the Standards and Quality reports at the end of each session.

## **Ratho Primary School**

In May 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class. During the visit, they talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. Here are Education Scotland's evaluations:-

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Good
2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion	Satisfactory
3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement	Good

## **Nursery**

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Good
2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion	Good
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Satisfactory

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:-

- 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.

In December 2022, a team of QICS officers visited Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class to report on progress. The findings evidence that Ratho Primary and Nursery had made appropriate progress in all four areas highlighted by Education Scotland in 2020. Strengths and next steps are detailed in the report. (Appendix 3). The Quality

Improvement Education Officers for the school and the nursery will continue to work with the Head Teacher to provide support and to challenge progress across the school and this will continue to be reported to parents & carers through the Standards and Quality reports at the end of each session.

### **4.3 Supported Self-Evaluation**

Since the last Committee, QICS officers have undertaken supported self-evaluation processes with the schools noted below. Strengths and areas for improvement are included for each.

#### **Wester Hailes High School**

A team of officers from The City of Edinburgh Council, undertook a one-day visit to Wester Hailes High School on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022. They each paired up with a member of staff from Wester Hailes High School who holds a leadership responsibility in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. During the visit, a total of 30 lessons were visited, covering every faculty and year group. A further visit to the school was undertaken on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November. The self-evaluation activities on that day included pupil focus groups, staff focus groups, individual meetings with staff members, and visits to the Wellbeing Hub and to Support for Learning.

#### **Strengths**

- All young people, spoken to, report that they feel safe at school and that they all have a key adult to speak to about any concerns. They felt that staff were approachable and that they cared about them. Almost all pupils felt they were listened to and that appropriate action was taken to address their concerns. This is as a result of the positive relationships which existed in all observed lessons.
- Staff demonstrate an understanding of the social, economic and cultural context within which children, young people and their families live, and an awareness of their responsibility in supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes.
- The school vision, values and aims were co-constructed by a range of stakeholders, and the school community has ownership of them. This is articulated confidently by pupils.
- Some pupils, particularly from the Senior Phase, felt that they were provided with leadership opportunities
- Almost all pupils were ready to learn and were engaged in almost all lessons observed.
- Staff across the school demonstrated a shared understanding of the importance of nurture and getting it right for young people.
- In the Senior Phase, presentation numbers for graded courses at SCQF level 5 has risen steadily over a 5-year period, from 141 entries in 2017-18 to 282 entries in 2021-22, reflecting increased expectations and aspirations.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- The school should maintain the clear focus that has already been established on level 5 attainment in S4, and on maximising the number of learners who achieve 5 or more awards at this level. Linked to this, increasing the quality of SCQF level 5 awards by strengthening the component marks in each subject area, will provide learners with the best chance of confidently progressing to level 6 within subjects, and in turn will support the increased attainment at SCQF level 6 in S5 and S6.
- Consistency in learning and teaching approaches should be achieved including a focus on Assessment for Learning strategies.
- Provide clarity to all staff and pupils re strategies to support inclusion, including reviewing the Pupil Support system.
- Further opportunities, for learner participation, should be provided.
- The re-introduction of the full range of self-evaluation activities that previously existed in the school self-evaluation calendar is now required.

## **Queensferry High School**

A team of officers from The City of Edinburgh Council, undertook a Supported Self-Evaluation visit to Queensferry High School from 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

## **Strengths**

- A positive ethos, where caring and supportive relationships exist between staff and learners.
- Young people are eager to learn, have pride in their school and feel they are supported in their learning.
- The Head Teacher has high expectations and a clear vision for change. Strong leadership from the senior leadership team has enabled the development of this clear vision. Distributive leadership opportunities are provided for staff.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- Ensure high quality learning experiences are happening consistently through self-evaluation activity. This includes a focus on Assessment for Learning strategies.
- Ensure all staff are involved in the process of change and improvement.
- Senior Leadership engagement with the Leadership for Equity programme.
- Increase pace, challenge and differentiation in learning.
- Further develop learner participation in leading improvement.
- The school should explore ways in which digital technology could be further used to enhance the learning experience.
- Further professional learning in a range of additional support needs would help all staff to develop a greater understanding of the barriers faced by young people.
- Senior staff should continue to develop a clear and coherent strategic overview of the school's work related to wellbeing and how this will be applied in every learning experience.
- Improve systems for tracking wider achievement.

- Young people to be fully engaged in their learning, and participate in decision-making, about their learning pathways and future career aspirations.

### **Pirniehall Primary School**

In January, 2023, the above team of officers and head teachers took part in a Supported Self Evaluation visit over a two-day period. Pirniehall is a priority school in receipt of intensive support.

### **Strengths**

- Staff and partners understand the context of the school and demonstrate nurture and compassion in their interactions and approaches to working with young people. Collaboration with partners is meaningful and targeted to benefit those most in need.
- Positive relationships, across the school community were evident throughout the visit and reflect the school's commitment to social justice across the school and nursery.
- In most lessons, children were calm and engaged and the learning was purposeful.
- Wider achievement is tracked and discussed at termly tracking and monitoring meetings. Targeted approaches to providing opportunities for care experienced children and those living in poverty are beginning to happen, for example sporting opportunities and mentoring. This is well supported by a range of partners and closely monitored to evaluate impact.
- The new tracking system monitors progress of individual children and cohorts eg care experienced and those living in poverty. This includes attainment over time and recently the tracking of wider achievement.
- The nursery learning environment provides opportunities for extended rich deep play where young learners can lead and extend their own learning.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Create a shared vision and aims, refreshing school values to underpin the curriculum rationale to build a culture of ambition and high expectations across the school community.
- Pupils, parents/carers, and partners should become more involved in shaping school improvement. Learner participation should be an immediate priority to increase opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning and develop the four capacities across the four contexts for learning.
- The school should continue its work on Assessment for Learning strategies underpinned by the Teachers; Charter.
- The school should improve pace and challenge. In almost all classes there was scope for more aspirational learning for all pupils. Differentiation should be used more effectively as a tool to provide appropriate pace, challenge and support.
- The school should develop a Promoting Positive Behaviours Policy. As part of the new policy, the school should embed a consistent approach to supporting self-regulation and de-escalation strategies. This should include restorative approaches and responding to incidents of bullying and prejudice.



- As a priority, the school should develop its Equalities work in line with CEC policy
- All staff should engage with the Leadership for Equity programme.
- Responsive planning, and the use of observations, in the Nursery need to be
- developed as an essential next step. Staff should explore ways to integrate literacy and numeracy across the environment.

### **Forthview Primary School**

In January, 2023, a team of officers and head teachers took part in the Supported Self Evaluation visit over a two-day period. Forthview is a priority school in receipt of intensive support.

### **Strengths**

- All staff have a strong understanding of the social economic and cultural context of the school. They are caring, compassionate and nurturing, which is reflected in the warm relationships which exist.
- The school constantly reflects on their supports for the children in their care. They are solution focussed and work very well with partners to meet the needs of learners, and their families. Staff work hard to minimise potential barriers to learning.
- Learners say they feel safe and respected. They have daily opportunities to reflect on their wellbeing. Consequently, staff have a good understanding of the wellbeing needs of their learners. The school has a planned progressive Health and Wellbeing curriculum.
- Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy is a clear focus of the school.
- In the nursery, learners were engaged in meaningful play experiences and the environment supported children's independence.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- The school should continue to develop their new vision, values and aims collaboratively with all stakeholders. These should underpin a new curriculum rationale which should reflect the school's unique context and ambition for improving outcomes for all learners. High expectations should be promoted consistently across the school.
- Rigorous approaches to tracking and monitoring, including wider achievement, should be implemented.
- Increase pace, differentiation and challenge in learning.
- Increase opportunities for pupil voice and leadership of learning and improvement.
- The Head Teacher should ensure there are systems in place to track and plan for mandatory staff training.
- As a priority, the school should develop its Equalities work in line with CEC policy.
- The school should reflect on timetabling to ensure the balance of planned learning experiences maximises learning time and pupils' engagement.
- There is an over reliance on 1-1 support for pupils from staff and the schools should continue to reflection the impact of this and work towards creating a balance between 1-1 supports and group interventions.

- Senior leaders and teachers should engage in the Leadership for Equity programme.
- Explore opportunities for learners in the Nursery to develop independence.
- Continue to develop responsive, planning approaches and high quality observations in the Nursery. Use the child centred teaching cycle from Realising the Ambition to support this.

### **Ferryhill Primary School**

In January, 2023 a team of officers and head teachers took part in a Supported Self Evaluation visit over a two-day period.

#### **Strengths**

- The new Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team have quickly established their commitment to leadership of improvement, with a clear focus on meeting the needs of all learners.
- A robust analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data has been gathered and collated by the senior leadership team, to identify strengths and improvements.
- Relationships within the staff team are very positive and staff are caring and supportive of learners across the school.
- There are some examples of good teaching where teachers had planned imaginative lessons which engaged learners.
- In a few of the classes, the use of digital technologies was innovative and motivating for learners. In
- A review of GIRFEC approaches to wellbeing has been a significant focus. Although progress has been slow, the impact of this is evident in how supported staff, children and parents feel.
- Implementing a tracking and monitoring system has been a priority. This is now in place and beginning to be used by the school leadership team to inform decision making around appropriate interventions.
- Staff interactions with children in the Nursery were skilful, particularly when de-escalating distressed and dysregulated behaviour. This demonstrated that children's emotional wellbeing is being supported and nurtured. Staff also interacted well with children, to sustain engagement and extend learning<sup>1</sup>In areas of the Nursery.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

- As a priority, the school should begin to look at processes to collegiately develop a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school community.
- Staff need to ensure more consistency in approaches to the planning and delivery of quality learning and teaching. This should focus on pace, differentiation and challenge.
- As a priority, the school should begin to collegiately develop its Health and Wellbeing strategy, including developing learners' understanding of the wellbeing indicators.
- Currently, learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not well enough developed. This should be developed as a priority.

- The leadership team should work with staff on their collation and analysis of attainment data, alongside the standards, to support confident, professional judgments about children’s learning.
- Effective tracking of learners’ wider achievement.
- All Senior leaders should attend Leadership for Equity professional learning.
- In the nursery, approaches to responsive planning and quality observations should be revisited and extended.
- Staff should work collaboratively to identify and develop ways to capture children’s progress and support learning conversations and the setting of next steps.

### **Edinburgh Secure Services (Howdenhall & St Katherine’s)**

In September 2022, Education Scotland inspectors visited Edinburgh Secure Services undertaking a short model inspection. Here are Education Scotland’s evaluations:-

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Unsatisfactory
3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement	Weak

As a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection of the school during week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. The provision (education and care setting) remains under review to ensure that the needs of the young people attending are fully met. A detailed action plan has been co- constructed with the school, with progress and impact being monitored closely. The QICS continues to work closely with the school to support preparations for the planned further inspection.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 QICS to continue to undertake the planned calendar of activity related to follow-through visits which will be reported to Education, Children & Families Committee.
- 5.2 QICS to continue to undertake planned calendar of Supported Self-evaluation activity, the themes from which will be reported to Education, Children & Families Committee.
- 5.3 QICS to review the Capacity and Risk Register to provide proportionate levels of support and to plan future review activity.
- 5.4 QICS to ensure that all actions for improvement are implemented by schools within agreed timescales.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There are no financial implications contained in this report.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 7.1 The Edinburgh Learns Improving Quality in Learning Board will continue to consult with a range of reference groups i.e. senior leaders, practitioners, parents/carers & young people & Education Scotland to ensure helpful guidance and support is provided to schools to secure continuous improvements and effective self-evaluation approaches.
- 7.2 Quality Improvement Education Officers will continue to evaluate Standards & Quality reports and share local knowledge to maintain an accurate Capacity & Risk Register to inform prioritised support. This will include an analysis of quality indicator grades (1.3, 2.3, 3.2, 3.2) which schools self-evaluate.
- 7.3 The QICS will continue to respond to learning from ongoing inspection and internal review processes. Emergent themes focused on areas for improvement will be provided to schools through internal support and challenge activity:- intensive, targeted or universal approaches.

## 8. Background reading/external references

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- 8.1 <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/HGIOS4>
- 8.2 The Royal High School Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) is to be available on the Education Scotland website at: <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=4955>
- 8.3 Edinburgh Secure Services (Howdenhall and St Katharine's) Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

## 9. Appendices

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- 9.1 Appendix 1- The Royal High School Inspection Report
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Dalry Primary School and Nursery Follow-through Report
- 9.4 Appendix 3 – Ratho Primary School and Nursery Follow-through Report

28 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In December 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited The Royal High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Together with the senior leadership team, she has successfully established a school community where young people and staff feel valued and motivated to contribute. As a result, they are making continuous and successful improvements confidently across the school.
- The exceptional contribution of young people to bringing about positive changes to the school. They demonstrate strong leadership in many aspects of school life. This supports young people to be successful, to achieve highly and have a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of their school.
- The respectful climate for learning is highly inclusive and staff support young people very well to achieve their best. Teachers and young people use digital technology very creatively. This significantly enhances learning experiences and helps to meet the needs of all young people.
- Young people have a very strong understanding of diversity and equality. 'We all belong here' is lived and promoted very successfully in every aspect of school life. Young people value and celebrate difference. Equity sits at the heart of the school experience. Young people demonstrate respect, confidence and resilience and they thrive and flourish in Royal High School.
- The very high standard of attainment for all young people. By S6, attainment is very strong. From S1, young people are being very well prepared for future life and work. Attainment for specific groups of learners is also very high and this includes those living in challenging circumstances.

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

- Continue to raise expectations and challenge in learning for S1 to S3 young people.
- Continue to support young people's understanding of the skills they achieve across all areas of the curriculum.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). 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 The Royal High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
<b>Leadership of change</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>very good</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

### 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

## Appendix 2 The City of Edinburgh Council

### Follow Through Report

#### Dalry Primary School and Nursery Class

February 2023

#### Background

Education Scotland undertake an annual sample of inspections across Scotland (approximately 240 per year) covering nursery, primary, special and secondary schools. A letter to parents and carers about 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.

Dalry Primary School was inspected in May 2018. In February 2023, a team of Quality Improvement Education Officers from The City of Edinburgh Council, representing the nursery and primary sectors, visited Dalry Primary School and Nursery Class. They visited classes and they worked closely with the Head Teacher, the senior leadership team and wider staff to evidence the progress and improvements which the school had made.

#### Report

During the inspection visit in 2018, Education Scotland evaluated the school and nursery class as follows:

##### School

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good
3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement	Good

##### Nursery Class

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Satisfactory
3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Good

The three areas for improvement identified during the Education Scotland inspection report, published in August 2018, are as follows, and this report covers progress relating to each one in turn.

- Across the school, continue to develop opportunities to involve children more in decisions about their learning, and support them to have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve further.
- Engage further in opportunities for staff to work together with other colleagues within and beyond the school, sharing best practice. Continue to review the effectiveness of the wide range of interventions in place to further raise attainment and achievement for all children.
- Practitioners in the nursery class should develop further their early work to ensure all activities are challenging and build on children's prior learning across the early level.

## Follow Through Report

### Overview of the learning experience

During the local authority follow-through visit in February 2023, the visiting team witnessed positive and nurturing relationships between staff and pupils in all lessons visited (including intervention groups). Learners were motivated and engaged throughout, and were actively involved in their learning.

A range of formative assessment for learning strategies were used in all classes visited, in order to check for understanding. Success criteria (steps to success) was evident in almost all lessons, almost all of which were relevant to the learning and included clear 'I can' statements. The next step in this area will be to develop consistency across all classes in how and when to include pupils in the co-creation of this, either fully or in part. Examples of differentiation by product/outcome and through questioning were evident in almost all classes.

Where support staff were working with classes, they worked effectively with learners and provided high-quality support to groups and individuals.

**Area for improvement 1: Across the school, continue to develop opportunities to involve children more in decisions about their learning, and support them to have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve further.**

Children are able to be independent and extend their learning through a wide range of experiences within the ELC/nursery play areas and routines.

Rich and meaningful opportunities both inside and outdoors ensure that children are motivated and engaged in their learning within ELC/Nursery.

Within Interdisciplinary Learning, learners and staff highlighted opportunities for learners to choose what they learn (examples included World War II under the theme of 'conflict', Jungles vs Polar Bears, Romans and Victorians, Natural Disasters). Pupils valued the opportunity to do this.

Weekly Masterclasses for pupils from P4-P7 are highly valued by learners, and provide clear decision making opportunities for learners in 3-week blocks. This enables all learners to engage with Wider Achievement within the school, and to cover a varied range of skills-based activities throughout the year.

Pupils in the Equalities group are involved in leading learning across the school through specific inputs designed and created by them that are relevant to the age and stage of the participating classes.

Pupils have been involved in ensuring that Equalities are embedded in the school curriculum, including feeding their views into the texts available in the school library and in classrooms as a stimulus for learning, with a particular focus on decolonisation, so that all pupils felt they could see themselves in what they were learning.

Pupils could speak confidently about their next steps in learning, and the steps for success in their learning. Written and verbal feedback from staff across the school supported pupils in knowing what to work on next.

Now that learners are fully engaging in decisions about *what* they learn, the school can consider how to further their opportunities in terms of deciding *how* they go about learning and how they demonstrate their skills and understanding for assessment purposes.



**Area for improvement 2: Engage further in opportunities for staff to work together with other colleagues within and beyond the school, sharing best practice. Continue to review the effectiveness of the wide range of interventions in place to further raise attainment and achievement for all children.**

ELC/Nursery staff have clear roles, remits and leadership opportunities to take forward improvements. Staff are involved in professional dialogue linked to evidence-based practice leading to continuous improvement. They have taken the opportunity to visit other settings encouraging staff to look outwards to support self-evaluation and improvements within the ELC/Nursery. Group times/'chatty time' within the ELC/Nursery is focused on communication and literacy. The groups are differentiated to meet children's needs. Staff regularly review and track children's progress within this time therefore groups are fluid and flexible. Up, Up and Away is used to support targeted interventions.

All staff spoken to felt valued, well led and supported, and part of a team. They have opportunities to collaborate within the school in order to learn from one another, and staff strengths are recognised and utilised in order to build capacity across the wider staff team.

Partnerships between school staff and specialist provision such as EAL Service are valued and utilised effectively by the school, and school staff highlighted opportunities to visit other schools as part of their 'looking outwards' approach to improvement.

Shared classroom experience across peers is a feature of practice, allowing staff to collaborate and share ideas. Attainment and progress meetings 3 times per year were valued by staff and the data discussed informs next steps and planning of universal and targeted supports and interventions to meet the needs of all learners.

The interventions delivered by teachers and support staff are of high quality and are meeting the needs of learners currently. A flexible and responsive approach is adopted, which means that learners can move in and out of interventions based on progress.

**Area for improvement 3: Practitioners in the nursery class should develop further their early work to ensure all activities are challenging and build on children's prior learning across the early level.**

Transition home visits and shared skills focus with parents and carers are supporting staff to build on children's existing strengths.

The key worker system that is adopted in the nursery is supporting staff to know the children well as learners.

Observations in learning journals are clear and focused on significant learning supporting children to be challenged and building on prior learning. Staff share the wide range of experiences in learning journals with parents and carers. Continuity across early level is developing, ensuring that P1 is building on children's prior learning from ELC/Nursery.

**Summary**

The Quality Improvement Education team found that Dalry Primary School and Nursery Class had made appropriate progress in all three areas highlighted by Education Scotland in 2020. The Quality Improvement Education Officers for the school and the nursery will continue to work with the Head Teacher to provide support and to challenge progress across the school and this will continue to be reported to parents and carers through the Standards and Quality reports at the end of each session.

DRAFT

### Appendix 3

#### Ratho Primary School

#### Post-inspection Visit by City of Edinburgh Council 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022

In May 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Ratho Primary School and Nursery Class. Following the inspection, in August 2018, Education Scotland published a letter outlining the following areas of improvement that were identified:

- 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

The following evaluations were achieved within each of the core quality indicators:

#### Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate Evaluation - May 2018

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 <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale.</a>	

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 <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale.</a>	

### **The Post-inspection Visit**

In order to report on progress, a team of council officers visited the school and nursery on 12th December 2022. The team consisted of the Early Years Quality Improvement Manager and two Quality Improvement Education Officers. The team carried out joint shared classroom experiences with members of the Senior Leadership Team to the nursery and eleven classes.

The team met with the school's Senior Leadership Team to discuss progress with the priorities identified by HMIE. The team also met with the following focus groups: pupils from P5-7, teaching staff, pupil support staff, nursery practitioners and a group of parents.

### **Findings of the Visit: progress with areas of improvement**

**Both in the school and the nursery, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for leadership across all staff, parents and children.**

### **Strengths/Progress made**

A positive ethos across the whole school community is supporting strong teamwork and partnership working. Leadership opportunities have been increased and are being undertaken in many areas by staff at all levels across the school and nursery, e.g., Literacy, Numeracy, Forest, Loose Parts, Rights Respecting Schools, Technologies, Learning for Sustainability, Equalities etc. Clear roles and responsibilities for the Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff and Pupil Support Officer are outlined in the school's shared leadership overview. Staff feel trusted to lead improvements and feel supported to undertake their roles well. They work closely together and value the opportunities provided to lead and share professional learning for one another. The Early Years Officer leads the staff team well working closely with the Senior Leadership Team within the school.

The school's collegiate activity and quality assurance calendars evidence regular opportunities for staff to capture, discuss and moderate pupil work and progress. Staff have valued the opportunity to participate in recent Writing moderation activities with colleagues in the Balerno learning community to support professional judgements and to network with others at the same stage. Recent shared classroom experience visits have also supported the professional development of staff and provided opportunities to consider consistency in learning, teaching and assessment approaches across the school. A Monitoring and Self-Evaluation calendar has been developed and is used by the nursery staff team to support engagement with the Improvement Plan. All practitioners have been involved in many improvements across the nursery and are using national guidance to review practice and self-evaluate.

Learners are involved within a range of leadership groups and leadership opportunities within the school including Knights Rights, Ratho Action Group, Digital Leaders and Eco Warriors and have planned opportunities to share their work with other pupils in assemblies.

Parents and carers in nursery and school have reported that since Covid there has been an increase in well planned opportunities to be part of the life of the school. They have been welcomed and have appreciated opportunities to participate in community events such as P1 transition evening, Meet the Teacher, Harvest festival, Christmas Fair, nativities, and class assemblies. Practitioners in nursery engage with parents and carers throughout the year, meeting with their key group parents for consultations and sharing summative reports to support parents to engage in their children's learning. Parents and carers have welcomed the recent opportunity to share their views regarding

homework which has led to the creation of a new policy and has led to improved consistency in procedures across the school.

#### **Next steps/continue to**

- Evaluate the new self-evaluation systems and processes which are in place to determine and understand the impact on continuous improvement.
- Ensure that self-evaluation activities are captured and that the impact of improvements is gathered and evidenced showing the improvement journey in both the nursery and school.
- Involve learners more in planning and leading learning in the classroom as well as increasing decision-making opportunities within pupil voice groups to enable them to talk confidently about the impact of the work they are undertaking.

**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.**

#### **Strengths/Progress made**

Strong practice and pedagogy are evident within Early and First Levels across the nursery, P1 and into P2. Floor books evidence children's experiences and interests and there is good scaffolding in place through adult support and differentiation to meet the needs of learners.

The continuous provision within the playroom supports creativity, curiosity, and inquiry through using open-ended resources. It is well organised and is inviting for the children who are comfortable and engaged within the nursery. Children have access to free flow play both indoors and outside, as well as regular mini forest experiences. Intentional and responsive planning is well established and is communicated with parents via e-learning journals. The curriculum is planned well with a balance of child led and adult initiated experiences linked to the school curriculum plan. The Early Years Officer keeps a clear overview of planning for learning experiences linked to CfE whilst also supporting individual practitioners in planning for their individual groups. Skilled staff in P1 and P2 recognise the importance of observations for planning and assessment of learning and ensure that time is available for observation throughout the day. Some skilled questioning and commentary were evident in supporting and extending learning. Children are gathered for short periods of time for adult led input which is nurturing, encouraging, and sensitively planned to avoid interrupting play. The Early Years Practitioner is well utilised to support learning through play both indoors and outdoors.

Across the school, children are eager, engaged, and active participants who demonstrate that they are successful, confident, and responsible in their learning. It was evident in all classes that staff know and respond very well to the individual needs of children, promoting and supporting their wellbeing. Staff provide clear explanations and instructions to model, guide, and support learners. In most classes, learners' experiences were appropriately challenging and enjoyable with learners demonstrating good levels of independence and responsibility. Most staff are planning appropriately to meet the needs of all learners through using a range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches. Learning is enriched and supported through effective use of digital technologies in most classes with a wide variety of assessment approaches being used to capture learner progress.

Tasks, activities, and resources are effectively differentiated in the majority of classes to ensure appropriate pace and challenge with learners receiving high quality feedback. A majority of learning

was observed closely to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning experiences.

### **Next steps/continue to**

- Consider the frequency of individual focused observations in the nursery on children's significant learning and how these can now be developed to ensure that all children's needs are fully understood and supported. This practice should be developed further to ensure that there is robust tracking and monitoring of individual children's progress over time.
- Use a consistent language when constructing success criteria and provide opportunities for learners to co-construct these in lessons.
- Ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all learners, but particularly for the more able.

**Continue to develop and build partnerships with parents and professionals to ensure all children's needs are fully understood and supported.**

### **Strengths/Progress made**

Good relationships between parents/carers and the school are evident. Parents feel well supported and staff welcome parental involvement within the classroom. Staff are very approachable and are responsive in addressing any concerns which arise. Parents value that staff are visible in the playground to provide support where required and that a range of supports are available to parents as well as to the children.

Staff know children and families very well and understand the importance of building strong relationships to support positive outcomes. They have a good understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school and work collaboratively together to support families wherever possible.

All staff are warm and nurturing which supports a very inclusive ethos. They actively promote the wellbeing of children, and the wellbeing indicators are evident within the nursery and across the school. Children indicate that they are happy and safe in school.

The staff in nursery are now engaging with the UNCRC and value the importance of this to support an equitable and inclusive environment. They aim to meet the needs of all children and provide appropriate support to those children with ASN. Restorative practice is used across the nursery aligning with the school, supporting positive outcomes for children and families.

Termly attainment meetings are focused on meeting pupil needs through discussions of progress in learning, interventions required, and further partner agency supports. Staff are committed to meeting pupils' needs and use data effectively in their day-to-day practice to allocate support and targeted interventions.

Good systems are in place in school to track and monitor children's progress and achievements, in partnership with other professionals and parents. The Support for Learning teacher provides strong support for colleagues in supporting learners. The introduction of a new Support for Learning model and Additional Support Needs policy has also led to improvements being made. A Child Planning Meeting tracker has recently been introduced to record and track meetings being held and the Pupil Support Officer supports families by talking them through the process beforehand which is proving to be beneficial. School staff work collaboratively with a variety of professionals and partners to

ensure that children's needs are well met through having a range of universal, co-ordinated, and targeted supports in place.

There are strong transition arrangements in place to support children at all stages in transitioning from one stage to another. The inclusion of pupil voice and enhanced transition arrangements further support this being a smooth and seamless transition. Staff work in partnership with colleagues and partners to ensure that information is shared and that any adaptations, interventions and resources are put in place to support the transition process effectively.

#### **Next steps/continue to**

- Align processes in the nursery with school to capture and monitor children's progress.
- Explore ways to support children in knowing and understanding themselves as learners.

**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.**

#### **Strengths/Progress made**

A clear vision and strong values underpin the new curriculum plan which demonstrates the unique community and context of Ratho Primary School. It is evident that there is a clear vision and values in the nursery which align with the school. The values are made very real and relevant within the playroom. The WOW wall linked to the star of the week is a lovely example of ensuring that the values are meaningful for the children. The school's House system has recently been introduced into nursery to make this part of the seamless transition to school.

The recent introduction of Vision Time to support the curious and creative community element of the school's vision is providing meaningful and beneficial opportunities for staff and learners to work together in progressing aspects of the school improvement plan, as well as allowing learners to build relationships with other children and staff across the school and providing a varied range of activities for learners to participate in both indoors and outdoors. Staff work hard to ensure that the vision and the values are at the heart of the work that they do within the school and the community, making it meaningful for all.

There has been meaningful progress made in developing a shared understanding of what learning and progression looks like across the school. The pupil journey planner clearly outlines experiences and areas of study in all curricular areas from nursery to P7. A comprehensive forward planning toolkit is in place which supports all staff in ensuring that there is continuity and progression at all stages. A community learning planner incorporates the curriculum with areas which are relevant and specific to the Ratho community and surrounding areas. This links to the 3-18 Skills for Careers Framework and makes meaningful links to developing the young workforce. An Interdisciplinary planner has also been developed which provides possible contexts to be studied in three-year cycles, promoting progression and depth in learning. The school recently marked the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union Canal by celebrating in a Flotilla 200 community event. This included each class studying a different aspect linked to the Union Canal such as features, transportation, life on the canal as well as the geography and history of the canal. Links were made to the local area and promoted developing the young workforce as part of this work.

The school shares a variety of information with parents to communicate information and progress, and to share and celebrate achievements and improvements made. Work has been undertaken to

develop the school website in line with the school handbook to ensure that it provides up-to-date and relevant information for parents. The school twitter page and the fortnightly newsletter from the Head Teacher also support in providing information about the learners' experiences in Ratho Primary School. Parents are well informed about learner progress through a termly curriculum leaflet, three learning journal entries per term, two parent consultations as well as opportunities to come into school for curricular events.

**Next steps/continue to**

- Review and evaluate the impact that the curriculum plan has on children's learning experiences.
- Review the frequency of learning journals shared with parents in the nursery to evidence learning and progress over time.
- Review the place of learning journals in school as part of the process in capturing learning and progress.

**Conclusions**

During the follow-through visit with the local authority, the school and nursery have demonstrated progress with all of the HMIE identified areas for improvement. Plans have been developed to further embed the changes across the nursery and school to maintain consistency in learners' experience. The school has evaluated this progress in the Standards and Quality Report (June 2022) as:

Quality Indicator	Quality Indicator Value	Quality Indicator Value
	School	Nursery
<b>Leadership of Change</b>	GOOD	VERY GOOD
<b>Teaching, Learning &amp; Assessment</b>	GOOD	GOOD
<b>Wellbeing, Equality &amp; Inclusion</b>	GOOD	VERY GOOD
<b>Raising Attainment &amp; Achievement</b>	GOOD	GOOD