

Sub-Committee on Standards for Children and Families

10.00am, Wednesday 25 September 2019

Follow-through Inspection at Leith Academy

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Sub-committee on Standards for Children and Families is asked to:
- 1.1.1 note the findings of the report including the areas where the education authority and the school should continue to improve the school; and
 - 1.1.2 receive an authority inspection follow through report within two years of the publication of the inspection letter

Alistair Gaw

Executive Director of Communities and Families

Contact: Darren McKinnon, Quality Improvement Education Manager

E-mail: darren.mckinnon@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3044

Secondary School Inspection at Leith Academy

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following the Education Scotland (ES) inspection of Leith Academy in April 2018, officers from The City of Edinburgh Council conducted a follow-through inspection in February 2019 to determine the school's progress in relation to agreed areas for improvement. This report was shared with Education Scotland who then concluded that Leith Academy has the capacity to continue to improve and will publish no further reports in relation to the 2018 Education Scotland inspection report. Officers will continue to work with the school to ensure progress continues.

3. Background

- 3.1 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/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.
- 3.2 In February 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Leith Academy. During their visit, they talked to parents/carers, children and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. Evidence gathered enables Education Scotland to evaluate some quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition). Quality indicators help schools, education 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 evaluations of quality indicators to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing. As part of their ongoing support, officers from The City of Edinburgh Council conducted a follow-through inspection in February 2019 at Leith Academy to determine the school's progress in relation to agreed areas for improvement arising from the Education Scotland Inspection.

4. Main report

The report, published 24 April 2018 identified the following key strengths:

- 4.1 The inclusive and supportive environment which recognises the rich cultural and social diversity of Leith. The commitment to equalities is increasingly supporting the development of nurturing and positive relationships. As a result, most young people are positively involved in their learning across the school
- 4.2 The inclusive and supportive environment which recognises the rich cultural and social diversity of Leith. The commitment to equalities is increasingly supporting the development of nurturing and positive relationships. As a result, most young people are positively involved in their learning across the school.
- 4.3 The positive start made by the acting headteacher in developing a team approach to improvement. The commitment of staff and partners to implement change and improve outcomes for all young people.
- 4.4 The contribution young people make to leading key initiatives which is having a positive impact on the school's ethos.

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

- 4.5 In order to raise attainment and achievement for all, develop a more rigorous system for monitoring and tracking the progress of young people through the broad general education and continue to develop this within the senior phase. Through improved tracking, demonstrate the impact of interventions on all young people including those at risk of not achieving.
- 4.6 Through effective professional learning, continue to develop approaches to planning and monitoring school improvement. These approaches should include clearer systems to show improved outcomes.
- 4.7 Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school and allow young people more frequent opportunities to lead their own learning.
- 4.8 Continue to develop the school curriculum with a view to increasing curriculum pathways enriched by further partnership approaches. In order to support this, continue to develop wider partnerships across the culturally rich and diverse Leith community.
- 4.9 The Quality Improvement Education Officer continues to support the Headteacher in delivery of action plan developed in response to inspection findings.

Education Scotland's evaluations for Leith Academy:

Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	Weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good

Progress to date:

- 4.10 The school introduced a new tracking and monitoring system in August 2018 and can now track the progress of young people more rigorously, allowing earlier interventions for pupils, in particular those identified as being at risk of not achieving. Following training in the use of the new tracking system and the Insight analysis tool staff can use data more effectively to inform learner conversations. The lowest attaining 20% in S4 had been identified as a key target for improvement in session 2017-18; analysis of attainment in August 2018 shows performance of this group more than doubled and was now in line with the Virtual Comparator.
- 4.11 The school has a clear focus on supporting and improving the attainment of pupils in at-risk categories, with staff able to track the progress of care-experienced young people, as well as those living in areas of high deprivation. The school revised its presentation policy for national qualifications in the Senior Phase and demonstrated an increase in presentations over the last two sessions.
- 4.12 The Head Teacher has introduced a new approach to improvement planning, based on the use of improvement science, with a clear focus on the National Improvement Framework priorities. The school community commented on the development of a consistent, clear vision, led by a Head Teacher who was positively influencing the culture and ethos of Leith Academy.
- 4.13 A revised Learning and Teaching Policy has been developed and there has been a drive to increase opportunities for young people to lead their own learning, and on improve the use of digital learning. The school should now capture and share emerging good practice to support the improvement of all staff. More opportunities to develop and consolidate key skills in the later stages of the BGE would better prepare young people for the increased pace and challenge of the senior phase.
- 4.14 A wider curriculum offer is available with the introduction of new learner pathways based on vocational options. Expanded partnership working has produced a range of collaborative projects, such as the work with Edinburgh International Festival and Leith Trust. The school should continue to support faculties to engage more meaningfully with the Careers Education Standard and Work Placement Standard.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Overall, the school has taken steps to address the areas for improvement from the original inspection and has progressed well. The leadership and commitment of the senior team is a real strength, securing the commitment of the school community to improve outcomes for young people.
- 5.2 Education Scotland is confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and will publish no further reports in relation to the 2018 Education Scotland inspection report.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications contained in the ES report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Consultation and engagement:
Parents, pupils and staff completed an ES questionnaire prior to the inspection.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Sustainability impact:
None

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Leith Academy inspection report, Edinburgh Council 24/04/18
<https://education.gov.scot/assets/inspectionreports/leithacademyins240418.pdf>
- 8.2 Leith Academy summarised inspection findings, Edinburgh – 24/04/18
https://education.gov.scot/assets/inspectionreports/leithacademy_sif240418.pdf

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Follow-through Inspection Report for Leith Academy, Edinburgh – 15/03/19

Appendix 1

Leith Academy Follow-Through Visit led by The City of Edinburgh Council

The following is taken from the Education Scotland inspection report for the school (February 2018):

Identified Strengths

- The inclusive and supportive environment which recognises the rich cultural and social diversity of Leith. The commitment to equalities is increasingly supporting the development of nurturing and positive relationships. As a result, most young people are positively involved in their learning across the school.
- The positive start made by the acting headteacher in developing a team approach to improvement. The commitment of staff and partners to implement change and improve outcomes for all young people.
- The contribution young people make to leading key initiatives which is having a positive impact on the school's ethos."

Areas for Improvement

- In order to raise attainment and achievement for all, develop a more rigorous system for monitoring and tracking the progress of young people through the broad general education and continue to develop this within the senior phase. Through improved tracking, demonstrate the impact of interventions on all young people including those at risk of not achieving.
- Through effective professional learning, continue to develop approaches to planning and monitoring school improvement. These approaches should include clearer systems to show improved outcomes.
- Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school and allow young people more frequent opportunities to lead their own learning.
- Continue to develop the school curriculum with a view to increasing curriculum pathways enriched by further partnership approaches. In order to support this, continue to develop wider partnerships across the culturally rich and diverse Leith community.

As part of their ongoing support following the inspection by Education Scotland, officers from The City of Edinburgh Council will **report on progress at Leith Academy with the agreed areas for improvement.**

Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit.

The follow-through visit

In line with the recommendations made by Education Scotland, a team of council officers visited the school during the week beginning 18 February 2019. The team consisted of the Quality Improvement Manager for CEC secondary schools, three Quality Improvement Officers and a Depute Head Teacher from the Additional Support for Learning Service. Over the two-day visit, a number of learning episodes were observed. The team met with each member of the school's Senior Leadership Team to discuss progress with the priorities identified by HM Inspectors. The team also met with the following focus groups: young people from S1-S3 (the Broad General Education); young people from S4-S6 (the Senior Phase); teaching staff; staff with responsibility for leadership; representatives from the

Parent Council; and partner organisations who work with the school, along with non-teaching staff.

Note: when the school was inspected in February 2018, the (then) Acting Head Teacher had been in post since August 2017. He was subsequently appointed as (Permanent) Head Teacher in September 2018.

Findings of the visit: progress with areas for improvement

In order to raise attainment and achievement for all, develop a more rigorous system for monitoring and tracking the progress of young people through the broad general education and continue to develop this within the senior phase. Through improved tracking, demonstrate the impact of interventions on all young people including those at risk of not achieving.

The school introduced a new tracking and monitoring system (S1-S6) in August 2018. They were now able to track the progress of young people in the BGE more rigorously, allowing earlier intervention for pupils identified as being at risk of not achieving. The school had created a tracking calendar for each year group, with roles and responsibilities for key staff clearly identified to ensure appropriate action was taken. The effectiveness of interventions for those young people at highest risk was tracked by the Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for Pupil Support. Interventions with groups of young people were carefully organised to limit any possible impact on missing wider curricular areas, and the school produced evidence to support this.

All staff had been trained in the use of the new tracking system, as well as in the use of the Insight analysis tool. Training was delivered in-house and by one of the national Insight Development Officers. Staff welcomed the introduction of the new tracking and monitoring system and used the data effectively to inform learner conversations. Parents and young people were positive about the improvement in communications from the school regarding progress, but some felt that there were inconsistencies in the quality and frequency of learner conversations across the school.

The school had made significant improvements in tracking progress in the Senior Phase. The lowest-achieving 20% in S4 had been identified as a key target for improvement in session 2017-18. Staff were aware of this priority and the progress of pupils in this category was tracked via a “learning wall”; support with this group of pupils was also provided by the school’s “Learning Hub” and Pupil Support Officer. At the time of the original inspection, the performance of young people in this category (measured by complementary tariff score on Insight) had been significantly below the school’s Virtual Comparator for four years, with a declining pattern of attainment; analysis of attainment for August 2018 shows that the attainment of this group had more than doubled (by tariff score) and was now in line with the VC.

Improvements were also evident in the percentage of S3 pupils achieving Fourth Level in reading, writing and listening & talking (e.g the percentage attaining Fourth Level in reading increased from 12% in 2017 to 56% in 2018); and in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving SCQF Level 3 or better in literacy – this figure was now significantly above the VC. Young people with particular difficulties in literacy were given effective additional support via partner organisations (e.g. the Superpower Agency). An improving pattern of attainment was also evident in the attainment of young people with Additional Support Needs in S4.

The school had a clear focus on supporting and improving the attainment of pupils in at-risk categories, with staff able to track the progress of care-experienced young people as well as pupils living in areas of high deprivation. The school had revised its presentation policy for national qualifications in the Senior Phase, and was able to demonstrate an increase in presentations over the last two sessions.

The school was aware of issues with the attainment of leavers and had identified this as a key area for action in session 2018-19.

Through effective professional learning, continue to develop approaches to planning and monitoring school improvement. These approaches should include clearer systems to show improved outcomes.

The recently appointed Head Teacher had introduced a new approach to improvement planning, based on the use of improvement science (e.g. driver diagrams, setting targets and using tests of change), with a clear focus on the four priorities of the National Improvement Framework. Staff and Curricular Leaders welcomed the new approach which they said was more accessible, easier to manage, and more streamlined. Training for improvement science will be offered more widely next session by the local Improvement Officer to raise awareness across all staff.

The priorities in the whole school plan were revisited regularly at whole staff meetings and well-known by staff. They were referred to by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in emails to staff regarding the daily work of the school. Staff felt reassured that there was a consistent clear vision for the school which was reflected in the plan. They also appreciated the SLT's openness to new ideas and opportunities.

Faculties now had their own improvement plans, which reflected the whole-school plan and priorities and allowed more effective tracking of progress and impact. Faculties discussed and recorded progress with priorities at monthly faculty meetings and with faculty links (DHTs). Ongoing progress was marked or recorded in comments written directly on to the plan, ensuring that they were active documents and revisited regularly. Time had been set aside within the Working Time Agreement for whole school and faculty improvement planning. The focus of the annual management residential weekend in March was to review progress and start to plan for the following year. This year, the Head Teacher has invited partner and parent representatives to the residential weekend.

School partners said that they had seen the improvement plan, knew the priorities and knew that they could feed into it. They felt strongly that the leadership of the HT was positively influencing the culture and ethos of the school; this was a view also shared by staff, young people and parents.

A Partnership Improvement Planning launch event took place in September 2018, to which parents were also invited. Those who attended were able to voice their opinions and make amendments to the school plan as appropriate.

A consistent approach was adopted by the DHTs to recording progress with the actions identified by HM Inspectors for improvement in the original inspection. This allowed them to measure where improvements had taken place and where work was still to be done.

Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school and allow young people more frequent opportunities to lead their own learning.

The DHT with responsibility for learning and teaching demonstrated a clear understanding of current practice in the school with regard to learning and teaching, and the challenges and opportunities in moving the school forward. The school had revised and updated its learning and teaching policy; this included taking into account comments from young people regarding effective practice with the "four-phase lesson".

In session 2018-19 there was a clear focus on increasing opportunities for young people to lead their own learning, and on improving the use of digital learning. The school delivered training in pupil-led learning and this was a focus for faculty reviews, as well as teacher-collaborative "trios". Curricular Leaders now undertook "shared classroom experience" visits

with their staff, and pupil-led learning was again a focus. Visits to classrooms suggested that the school has made progress in this area, with young people in the Senior Phase given more opportunities to take control of their own learning, and young people speaking positively about this. The school should now capture and share emerging good practice in this area to ensure that all faculties are supported to improve in this area.

In visits to classrooms, awareness of skills in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing had improved. Skills icons were evident in every classroom and teachers made more reference to them. Young people knew what skills they were working on. They were able to reflect on their skills' development in PSE and to identify their own strengths and areas for development. They said this helped them when considering employment choices.

Staff confidence in using digital technology to enhance learning had increased. There were various opportunities for staff to improve their digital skills through in-house training sessions and a digital strategy was being prepared to improve consistency in this area.

Very good use of digital technology was observed in some subjects: in French, learners completed listening activities at their own pace using their iPads and were able to practice their oral presentations by listening to digital recordings of their presentations; in PSE, differentiated tasks were air-dropped to groups of young people working on different employability skills, and learners undertook independent research into career options; in Chemistry, learners used their iPads to search for evidence required for their assessment. Young people commented positively on a more consistent approach to using ICT in the Senior Phase in particular, felt that this helped them to be more organised, and appreciated being able to catch up with work missed because of absence.

In the lessons observed, young people were engaged, on task, and contributed well to activities. The four-phase model was evident. The purpose of learning was shared consistently by the use of learning intentions and success criteria, and in some cases pupils were able to participate in co-constructing these criteria. In Music, the learning process had been designed to encourage creativity and allow for a great deal of personalisation and choice, and for reflection on learning and personal achievement.

In the Senior Phase, learners took more responsibility for their own learning through their use of digital technology. Homework activities were frequently delivered through One Note. Some young people expressed concern at the increase in pace and challenge evident in the Senior Phase, particularly in S4 compared to S3. They would appreciate more opportunities to develop key skills in the later stages of the BGE to prepare them for the increased rigour in S4 – for example, more experience of extended writing.

Continue to develop the school curriculum with a view to increasing curriculum pathways enriched by further partnership approaches. In order to support this, continue to develop wider partnerships across the culturally rich and diverse Leith community.

Employment skills were promoted in most departments. Many faculties had links with business partners who were invited in to school to speak to young people. Local Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) had been shared with faculties, and displays created around the school. However, staff were not yet familiar with the transferable skills and entitlements in the Careers Education Standards or Work Place Standards documents. The school had identified this as a priority and were taking steps towards raising awareness of these documents; faculty review procedures will be revised to include a clear focus on skills development.

All faculties were asked to consider alternative pathways within subjects, and following the annual review of the timetable, new learner pathways were introduced in the Senior Phase. The subjects and courses on offer were based on interest, vocational benefit to the pupil, and current LMI. Examples included National Progression Awards in Journalism and Media;

courses in Sociology, Health and Sport; and bespoke work experience for targeted young people in S4. Links had been strengthened with Edinburgh College, especially in PE, Dance and Modern Languages.

Partnership working had extended with more collaborative projects planned or underway with a wider range of partners. The school had engaged with a three-year partnership with the Edinburgh International Festival and young people were involved in extensive consultation to help shape the project. Local business partnerships were supported by the Leith Trust following a successful business breakfast facilitated by young people. Work is now needed to prepare staff to participate in and promote these partnerships so that they can be sustainable and beneficial.

In focus groups, partners said that they had seen the school improvement plan, knew the priorities and knew that they could feed into it. Partners were aware of the school's vision and values, and felt they were reflected in the school's culture and ethos. They praised the school's SLT for being welcoming, supportive and solution-focused, and said that there was more partnership working now than a year ago. A number of staff have engaged in professional enquiry with partners.

In focus groups, young people recognised that there was a wider curriculum offer than before, and commented favourably on the higher profile which options such as apprenticeships had been given. They appreciated the school's approach to promoting equity and accessibility for all young people.

Conclusion

The visiting team recognized a very positive ethos in the school, underpinned by the newly reviewed vision and values. There was an ethos of inclusion and encouragement, and young people made it very clear that they felt well-supported by staff at all levels.

The strength and commitment of the SLT was a real strength. They had secured the commitment of middle leaders and staff across the school, with a real focus on improving outcomes for young people.

The school has made progress with all of the identified areas for improvement, and has planned for further improvements over time.

We are confident that school has the capacity to continue to improve, and our recommendation to Education Scotland is that they need not visit the school again with regard to the original inspection. Education Scotland is confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and will publish no further reports in relation to the 2018 Education Scotland inspection report.