

Sub-Committee on Standards for Children and Families

10:00am, Wednesday 25 September 2019

Primary School Inspection at Davidson's Mains Primary School

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Sub-committee is requested 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

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Report

Primary Inspection at Davidson's Mains Primary School

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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 and evaluations (Appendix 1) and the Summary of Inspection Findings (Appendix 2) advises the Sub-committee on the outcomes of the initial inspection.

3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate visited Davidson's Mains Primary School and Nursery Class. During their visit, they talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.
- Children across the school and nursery, who are articulate, polite and supportive of one another.
 - The interesting learning activities that motivate and engage children in their learning. At the primary stages, children are skilled in evaluating their own and one another's progress and success in learning.
 - The ways in which teachers across the school, integrate digital technologies effectively to enhance learning and challenge children's thinking. This success has led to children achieving mathematical skills in collecting, organising, interpreting and displaying data through the use of digital technology.
 - Engaging outdoor experiences in the nursery, including woodland adventures that

- promote children’s creativity and imagination.
- The independence of children in the nursery and their ability to lead their play with friends.

4.2 The following area for improvement was identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The City of Edinburgh Council.

- Continue to share and build upon the best practice in learning and teaching to improve consistency in high quality learning and teaching.
- Continue to raise expectations and develop a shared understanding of standards. Increase challenge and further raise attainment and progress for all.

4.3 More detailed Summarised Inspection Findings will be available from <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/edinburgh-city/5523125> and is included as an appendix.

4.4 Measures of Success

Inspectors gathered evidence to enable them to evaluate the school’s work using quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition) and How good is our early learning and childcare? 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 these evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Descriptions of the evaluations are available from How good is our school? (4th edition)

The school also engages in ongoing self-evaluation activity to gather evidence support to support their judgements about what is working well and what needs to be improved.

Here are the school’s gradings for the following quality indicators, together with Education Scotland’s gradings.

1. Quality Indicator	Self Evaluation	Education Scotland Evaluation
2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment	4 Good	4 Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	4 Good	4 Good
Nursery		
2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	4 Good	4 Good

3.2 Securing children's progress	4 Good	4 Good
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4.5 Progress Made with Identified Area of Development

- All staff to work with Edinburgh Learns team to use lesson study approach to improve quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school.
- Groups of staff are participating in CLPL for differentiation and questioning.
- Weekly stage planning meetings now include a discussion on moderation and twice termly level meeting are also having this as a focus.
- Challenge in play-based learning is being reviewed
- New systems in place to support progress for learners with additional support needs.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 City of Edinburgh Education Officers will continue to support and challenge progress across the school.
- 5.2 The Head teacher will continue to be part of the Professional Learning Partnership with groups of HTs across the City to ensure robust analysis of learning and teaching across the school.
- 5.3 City of Edinburgh Education Officers will undertake a follow-through visit to the school within 2 years of publication of the Inspection report.

6. Financial impact

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

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Inspection team engaged with focus groups of teaching staff, support staff and pupils during the follow through process.
- 7.2 There are considered to be no infringements on the right of the child.
- 7.3 Tracking of pupil performance by gender and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) is undertaken at school level and there are no adverse impacts.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 <https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/reports>

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Education Scotland letter and evaluations
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Summary of Inspection Findings

4 June 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Davidson's Mains Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- Children across the school and nursery, who are articulate, polite and supportive of one another.
- The interesting learning activities that motivate and engage children in their learning. At the primary stages, children are skilled in evaluating their own and one another's progress and success in learning.
- The ways in which teachers across the school, integrate digital technologies effectively to enhance learning and challenge children's thinking. This success has led to children achieving mathematical skills in collecting, organising, interpreting and displaying data through the use of digital technology.
- Engaging outdoor experiences in the nursery, including woodland adventures that promote children's creativity and imagination. The independence of children in the nursery and their ability to lead their play with friends.

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

- Continue to share and build upon the best practice in learning and teaching to improve consistency in high quality learning and teaching.
- Continue to raise expectations and develop a shared understanding of standards. Increase challenge and further raise attainment and progress for all.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) 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 Davidson's Mains Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Securing children's progress	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/edinburgh-city/5523125>

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.

Susan Gow
HM Inspector



Summarised inspection findings

Davidson's Mains Primary School Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

4 June 2019

Key contextual information

Davidson's Mains Primary School Nursery Class is accommodated in an attractive new building within the grounds of Davidson's Mains Primary School in Edinburgh. The nursery has one large playroom with an additional smaller playroom. Both playrooms have direct access to a large enclosed garden. Children are also able to access the school gym. Practitioners make good use of the school grounds including the woodland area. The nursery is registered for 78 children at any one time aged between two years and primary school entry. There is provision for a maximum of 20 children under three years of age. At the time of the inspection, there were two children under three years of age. Children attend for both part-time and full day sessions.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Warm and caring relationships between practitioners, children and families make learning in the nursery a positive and enjoyable experience for children. Children are able to access outdoor learning spaces throughout the day, and enjoy regular extended woodland adventures. We were able to observe how outdoor experiences are helping children of all ages to develop their creativity, imagination and resilience well.
- A few children aged two to three years attend the nursery. Practitioners take account of national guidance to plan appropriate and enjoyable nursery experiences. As a result, children are happy and increasingly confident as they play in the company of adults and older peers. Practitioners should continue to review provision for the youngest learners. In doing so, they should consider how they can provide additional nurturing experiences and further opportunities for children to explore using their senses.
- Children aged three to five years are confident as they make their way around the playrooms and outdoor spaces of the nursery. They demonstrate good levels of independence and are able to lead their play well, together with friends. A few children would benefit from further support to enable them to maintain positive levels of engagement and focus in play throughout the session. There is scope to develop further opportunities for children to extend early leadership skills.
- Overall, playroom experiences provide children with good opportunities to follow their interests. The majority of children engage well during lively group times and benefit from opportunities to share their learning with adults. A few experiences do not yet provide sufficient scope for children to deepen their engagement and extend their learning. We have asked practitioners to build on existing examples for effective self-evaluation to provide increased challenge in learning for children across the playroom.

- Interactions are consistently positive and supportive. Children are keen to share their ideas and experiences and readily engage in conversation with practitioners and with each other. Children enjoy revisiting their experiences using learning journals. Practitioners should now build on this secure foundation to support children to develop confidence in talking about and planning their learning over time. They should also consider how they might develop their use of digital technologies to enhance children's learning.
- Practitioners note children's interests and use this information to plan a range of experiences to support learning. They record observations of children in individual learning journals, along with photographs and videos. As a team, they have begun to improve the consistency and quality of observations. They should continue this work. As assessment improves, practitioners will be able to target learning experiences to provide enhanced support and challenge to learners. This will ensure all children are able to make best possible progress in their learning.
- Practitioners know children well. Tracking is at an early stage of development. We discussed how practitioners might continue to develop monitoring and tracking to take stock of children's learning on a regular, planned basis. By involving parents in this process, practitioners will be able to ensure stronger links between children's learning and achievements at home and in the nursery.
- Practitioners would benefit from participating in moderation activities with early level colleagues in the primary. This will allow teachers and practitioners to develop appropriate, increased expectations of children's progress in key aspects of learning and improve transition experiences further.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Children age two to three years are making good progress across their learning. They demonstrate confidence as they make choices about their play and move freely around the playrooms and outdoors. Children express themselves in their own way to make their needs and feelings known. They are developing their physical skills well through outdoor play, gym sessions and woodland experiences. Children are developing positive relationships with their peers and enjoy participating in group play, supported by practitioners. They are building their understanding of number through daily routines and exploratory play.
- Overall, quality approaches to early learning and childcare support children to make good progress in their learning. Most children are making good progress in communication and early language. They are becoming articulate communicators as they talk to each other during play and interact with practitioners. Most children show an interest in books and access these both independently and with practitioners. They recall familiar narratives and discuss different characters with confidence. A few children make their own books to represent their ideas or share their knowledge. Most children show an interest in early writing. There is scope for the majority of children to experience greater challenge and depth to develop their early literacy skills further.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They count with increasing confidence during play and are becoming familiar with numbers in the environment. Children explore concepts of volume and measure in their play. They are learning to use mathematical language as they play with malleable materials and make their own playdough. Children sort and categorise resources and natural materials with confidence. A few children need more support in order to make the best possible progress. The majority of children would benefit from increased challenge in this area of learning.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are becoming confident individuals and cooperate well as they play. Children understand how they can support their own wellbeing by making healthy choices and keeping active. Most children are developing good physical skills as they use large loose parts in the garden area and learn to ride bicycles. Children are developing their understanding of risk in the course of outdoor play and woodland experiences. There is scope to extend the use of the rich natural environment to build children's understanding of their role in conservation and sustainability.
- Most children are making good progress over time. Practitioners are building their skills in making professional judgements about how children are developing and learning. The team

have identified the need for children's profiles and tracking information to document progress more effectively. This will help practitioners to build on children's prior learning and ensure continuous progress. It will also enable practitioners to continue to improve the curriculum.

- Practitioners make effective use of praise to recognise children's achievements. Together with parents, they celebrate children's special events and home successes using the 'star moment' wall.
- Practitioners know children and families well. They are mindful of their individual circumstances and use this to provide sensitive, appropriate support. Practitioners are proactive in identifying and reducing barriers to learning or participation through positive, targeted approaches in order to promote equity in their work.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.