

Inspection of St Luke's Primary School

Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by Education Scotland which was communicated in their letter dated 12 December 2017.

2 Background

2.1 St Luke's Primary School was inspected in June 2017. The report was published on 12 December 2017 and has been distributed to all Elected Members and Church Representatives on the Cabinet for their information. A copy is included in appendix one.

2.2 Following inspection, Education Scotland gathers evaluations of the core quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish Early, Learning and Childcare settings and schools are doing. Education Scotland are trying out some new approaches to inspection and this inspection followed one of the new approaches called the short, more focussed school visit. This involved visiting the school for two and a half days with fewer inspectors with the two working week notification period. The visit had a specific focus on raising attainment and achievement and how a schools is addressing the need to close the equity gap; and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The inspectors did not make evaluations using the six-point scale outlined in any of the 'How good is our school?' series. Education Scotland published a statement about the confidence they had in the school's capacity for improvement. Noted below are the evaluations for St Luke's Primary School:

QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Satisfactory
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Weak

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

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Supported by the acting depute headteacher, she is developing systems to gather and analyse information on the work of the school. She knows children and their families well.
- In partnership with cluster schools she has produced a plan for next session to direct Pupil Equity Funding to reduce barriers to learning and raise attainment.
- The support given by learning assistants to raise the attainment of the most vulnerable children
- The schools' partnership working with its campus partner to plan a joint improvement programme directly linked to the context of both schools.

2.4 The following areas for improvement were identified by inspectors:

- Staff should increase the opportunities for children to be actively involved in planning and assessing their own learning to increase their understanding of the purpose of learning.
- Staff should work collaboratively to realise the whole school vision of raising attainment in a learning environment where staff and pupils have high expectations of themselves and each other.

2.5 Background factors as outlined by the local authority

It is important to note that St Luke's have a significant improvement journey ahead and this should not be underestimated. Supported by the local authority, the school has made good progress since the inspection in June. In order to secure continuous improvement, one of the main challenges which St Luke's face is the high turnover of staff and the school have experienced difficulties in recruiting staff who have approval to teach in a denominational school. This has had a significant impact in promoted posts as staff who are seeking promotion have moved into the non-denominational sector making recruitment and retention challenging. The local authority have worked closely with St Luke's to stabilise staffing which is key to the school improving. However given the number of teacher vacancies nationally it is particularly challenging to recruit and retain staff in areas of deprivation coupled with the school's denominational context.

2.6 Conclusion

As outlined in the inspection letter, Education Scotland are not confident that the school has effective arrangements for ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of education for all learners. As a result Education Scotland will return within one year of the published report to explore this further. After the return inspection Education Scotland will report on their findings.

Given that six months have now past from the point of inspection to the letter being published, it is important to note that the local authority and the school have drawn up a clear action plan which is being monitored robustly by the local authority to ensure that the school implements the key actions required to begin to ensure a culture of continuous improvement which improves the quality of education for all learners. Given the weak evaluation in a key indicator, the school is making good progress but there is a significant improvement journey ahead for the school to ensure that the progress that learners are making result in improved attainment and achievement as tracked through quality indicator 3.2 Raising Attainment and achievement.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The local authority have been increasing the level of support given to St Luke's in order to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement is established. The school group manager for the St David's ASG has been directly supporting the school to improve attainment and achievement, teaching, learning and assessment and staffing.

3.2 Risk

Education Scotland visit a sample of nursery, primary and secondary schools every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the school, its capacity for further improvement and sets out the main points for action.

Following the publication of that report further visits may be made to the school, either by Education Scotland or by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress. A follow-through report on the progress of the school is published by either Education Scotland or by the Education Authority, normally within 2 years of the date of publication of the original report. In the case of this report Education Scotland will return within one year of the published report.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by School Group Managers and Senior Education Managers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of the school to demonstrate its capacity to improve. In the case of this report, direct weekly support has been put in place to ensure that the school continues to improve. As outlined in section 2.5, St Luke's have a significant improvement journey ahead and this should not be underestimated.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The setting will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education Service will continue to challenge and support the setting in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Education (Scotland) Act aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Midlothian is highly committed to closing the attainment gap which compliments the strategies employed by Midlothian which are highlighted in the National Improvement Framework report which was presented to Council on 3 November 2015.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Copies of the report have been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently in the school and other interested parties.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no IT implications.

4 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the inspection report.
- (ii) Note that Education Scotland are trying out some new approaches to inspection and this inspection followed one of the new approaches called the short, more focussed school visit as outlined in section 2.2.
- (iii) Note the key strengths outlined in the report.
- (ii) Note the significant areas for improvement.
- (iii) Note the challenges faced by the school as outlined in section 2.5.
- (iv) Note that Education Scotland will return within one year of the published report.
- (v) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

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