

Inspection of Bilston Primary School and Nursery Class**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 24 April 2018.

2 Background

2.1 Bilston Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in January 2018. The report was published on 24 April 2018 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 school is addressing the need to close the equity gap; and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Education Scotland published a statement about the confidence they had in the school's capacity for improvement. Noted below are the evaluations for Bilston Primary School and Nursery Class:

Nursery

QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good
QI 3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Good

School

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

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

- The headteacher's clear direction and leadership, particularly in developing effective partnership working. This has enabled her to develop a nurturing school and nursery community successfully, in the short time since the school opened.
- All staff have developed strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community, creating a welcoming ethos where all children feel valued, and are encouraged to do their best.
- The nursery environment promotes children's curiosity, independence and problem solving skills well. Skilled practitioners who work effectively as a team and are reflective about their practice.

2.4 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Midlothian Council.

- Continue to engage all stakeholders systematically in decisions affecting them and in identifying improvement priorities for the school and the nursery class.
- Ensure that improvements are enabling all children to build on what they already know and supporting them to make the best possible progress in literacy and English, and in numeracy and mathematics.
- As planned, improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment across the school to ensure consistently high quality experiences for all children. The school and nursery should continue to develop its tracking and monitoring of children's progress, to raise attainment and achievement for all children.

2.5 Background factors as outlined by the local authority

It is important to note that Bilston Primary School opened in August 2016, so at the time of the inspection it had only been open for 16 months. Previously, Bilston was an annexe of Roslin Primary School. The staff, parents and partners have spent a significant amount of time forming a new school community around the new school, comprising pupils from the old annexe, along with a significant new cohort of learners from the new housing estate in the catchment. Inspectors confirmed that time spent on this community building had been worthwhile and necessary, and that they were confident that had they visited the school after 2 years, when more evidence had been gathered over time, they could have evaluated the inspection quality indicators as good.

2.6 Conclusion

As outlined in the inspection letter, Education Scotland are 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 not make any further visits to the school in connection with this inspection.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The local authority has increased the level of support given to Bilston Primary School in order to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement is established. A Schools Group Manager 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.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by Schools Group Managers and Senior Education Managers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of a school to demonstrate its capacity to improve. In the case of this report, direct support has been put in place to ensure that the school implements a robust action plan, based on the recommendations from this inspection report, with agreed timescales for action.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

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

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The school will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education Service will continue to challenge and support the school 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 background factors outlined in section 2.5
- (iv) Note that Education Scotland will not return to the school in connection with this inspection
- (v) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

1 March 2018

Report Contact:

Nicola McDowell Tel No: 0131 271 3719

E-mail: Julie.currie@midlothian.gov.uk

24 April 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

We are trying out some new approaches to inspection. You can find out about our engagement with stakeholders and the approaches we are trying out as a result on our website: [Future approaches to inspection and review](#). The inspection of your child's school was carried out using one of our new approaches.

In January 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited your child's school for a total of two days. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate aspects of the quality of leadership and children's achievements.

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

- The headteacher's clear direction and leadership, particularly in developing effective partnership working. This has enabled her to develop a nurturing school and nursery community successfully, in the short time since the school opened.
- All staff have developed strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community, creating a welcoming ethos where all children feel valued, and are encouraged to do their best.
- The nursery environment promotes children's curiosity, independence and problem solving skills well. Skilled practitioners who work effectively as a team and are reflective about their practice.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Midlothian Council.

- Continue to engage all stakeholders systematically in decisions affecting them and in identifying improvement priorities for the school and the nursery class.
- Ensure that improvements are enabling all children to build on what they already know and supporting them to make the best possible progress in literacy and English, and in numeracy and mathematics.
- As planned, improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment across the school to ensure consistently high quality experiences for all children. The school and nursery should continue to develop its tracking and monitoring of children's progress, to raise attainment and achievement for all children.

We gathered evidence to enable us 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.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Bilston Primary School

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Self-evaluation for self-improvement	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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
Self-evaluation for self-improvement	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	

This letter and a more detailed document called the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/midlothian/1003380>.

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. Midlothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Eleanor MacGregor
Managing Inspector