

Inspection of Newbattle High School

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the inspection report.
- (ii) Note that Education Scotland will ask Midlothian Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within eighteen months of the publication of this report. Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required.
- (iii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with Newbattle High School on the key strengths highlighted in the report.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by Education Scotland which was communicated in their report of 6th February 2024.

13 February 2024

Report Contact:

Colin McLean, Quality Improvement Manager Professional Learning and Digital Inclusion & Learning

Colin.McLean@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 In November 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Newbattle High School. The report was published on 6 February 2024 and is now available on Education Scotland's website.

3.2 Education Scotland is responsible for inspecting education settings throughout Scotland. Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators from How Good is our School 4? to evaluate the quality of education provision in the primary school:

QI	1.3	Leadership of Change
QI	2.3	Learning, teaching and assessment
QI	3.1	Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
QI	3.2	Raising attainment and achievement

The inspection of Newbattle High School was carried out using the Education Scotland short inspection model. Focussing on QI 2.3 and 3.2

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement. This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This letter is available in Appendix B. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement. This is available in Appendix B.

National Improvement Framework (NIF)

As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations of Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

Inspection Findings

Newbattle High School was evaluated as follows:

Quality Indicator	Grade
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

3.3 Strengths

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

- The headteacher has a clear focus on improving attainment and achievement and is supported by senior and middle leaders effectively. This is improving outcomes for young people who are impacted by social and economic disadvantage.
- Staff make skilful use of digital technology to enhance young people's learning experiences. This is helping to develop young people's skills and is encouraging them to reflect on their learning.
- Staff work with a range of partners effectively to support improved outcomes for young people. These include ensuring all young people achieve and develop important skills towards positive destinations.

3.4 Areas for improvement

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

- Senior leaders should ensure all staff apply a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching to their practice. Staff should have high expectations of all young people and plan tasks which are appropriately challenging to meet the needs of all.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to raise the attainment of all young people. Importantly, they should improve the number and quality of National Qualification passes by young people in S4 and S5.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop approaches to improving young people's attendance at all stages.

3.5 Conclusion

Education Scotland will ask Midlothian Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within eighteen months of the publication of this letter. 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. Midlothian Council will notify stakeholders of this outcome.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 Digital

There are no Digital implications.

4.3 Risk

Education Scotland's team of Inspectors visit a sample of education settings every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the setting and its capacity for further improvement.

Following the publication of the report further visits may be made to the setting, by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by central officers in the Education Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of settings to demonstrate their capacity to improve.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Report implications

Appendix B –Background papers/ resources

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- ☐ Holistic Working
- ☐ Hub and Spoke
- ☐ Modern
- ☐ Sustainable
- ☒ Transformational
- ☒ Preventative
- ☐ Asset-based
- ☒ Continuous Improvement
- ☐ One size fits one
- ☐ None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- ☐ One Council Working with you, for you
- ☒ Preventative and Sustainable
- ☐ Efficient and Modern
- ☒ Innovative and Ambitious
- ☐ None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Noted within.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

A link to the published report has been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently attending Newbattle High School and other interested parties.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

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

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Education (Scotland) Bill 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 poverty related attainment gap.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

APPENDIX B

Background Papers/Resource: [this link](#)

Education Scotland inspection findings letter to parents

Education Scotland summary of inspection findings