

Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

Purpose and audience

- This document (called the Further Inspection – Record of Visit or ROV) is provided within one working week of the publication of the letter to support the headteacher/head of setting in leading improvement. The findings and evidence in the ROV provide detail which will be helpful in guiding further planning and implementation of improvement.
- The ROV is provided for use by the education authority and headteacher/head of setting to which it refers. It is a technical document designed for use by education professionals.
- The ROV is not intended to be copied and distributed in its entirety. Headteachers/heads of setting should use their judgement in sharing particular sections of the document confidentially with others as appropriate to their areas of responsibility and interests.

Contents

- The ROV is the set of notes used by the inspection team for the discussion of findings meeting on the final day of the further inspection visit. It may also contain further information that was prepared in advance of the meeting, but which may not have been required in the discussion.
- The information in this ROV has been checked and edited to ensure that individual members of staff below appropriate levels of seniority and individual learners, or small groups of learners, cannot be identified and that it conforms to Scottish Government guidelines on the disclosure of data.
- The ROV is not an exclusive record of all of the evidence which underpins the evaluations as expressed in the published letter and should not be regarded as such.

Sources of evidence for the ROV

- In all inspections, inspectors visit learning activities in contexts appropriate to the establishment. They observe learning experiences and teaching and talk to staff and children about learning and achievement, and other aspects as appropriate to the inspection. Inspectors evaluate children's achievements in different aspects of the curriculum, using direct observation, sampling of learners' work, and additional data as appropriate to the sector. Inspectors also have a range of professional discussions with staff who have responsibility for managing the educational provision, and other staff as appropriate. They take account of stakeholders' views, including those gathered through pre-further inspection questionnaires when these are used in a further inspection, and discussions with parents and other members of the community, as appropriate to the sector.
- Further inspections begin with the senior staff of the establishment sharing their self-evaluation evidence with the inspection team, showing how they are bringing about improvement. This evidence contributes to evaluations of the progress made since the original inspection.

- The ROV may contain references to the way that Curriculum for Excellence is being taken forward in the context of the establishment. This may include progress in planning, prioritising and reviewing the curriculum, through the use of self-evaluation and improvement planning, and in applying key ideas and principles from Curriculum for Excellence. It may also include how the setting is working with partners and with its own staff to enable them to learn together to develop their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence ideas and put them into practice, supported by a plan for continuing professional development. There may be references to how Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes are being used to improve learning and achievement and how individual teachers are contributing to literacy and/or numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. The ROV may also refer to how staff identify and measure improvements in learners' experiences and in standards of achievement; how they communicate with and involve parents, and how they collaborate to plan and support learners' progress. The extent to which references to Curriculum for Excellence are made in the ROV will depend on the range and nature of the areas for improvement which were previously set out in the letter sent to parents following the original inspection and which are used to shape the further inspection.

Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

School/Setting Name	Lawfield Primary School
MI undertaking visit	Pamela Adamson
Date(s) of visit	26 – 28 February 2024
Publication date of original letter	23 June 2020
Letter publication date	23 April 2024
ROV sharing date	26 April 2024

Area for improvement 1

Raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school.

Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:

Staff have been working together to improve their understanding of children's attainment. Senior leaders have introduced this session, the use of the new Midlothian Council data dashboard to improve the collection and analysis of attainment data for each year group. Senior leaders ensured that staff received appropriate professional learning to support the dashboard's introduction. Staff's confidence in the use of data, and their ability to recognise trends in attainment, is beginning to strengthen as a result. Staff are at the early stages of using this data to plan next steps in learning.

Senior leaders and teachers meet termly to review children's progress and achievement using this improved data. These progress and attainment meetings are supporting staff to consider more closely how to meet the needs of all children to raise attainment. Staff welcome the clarity of guidance now in place to support their preparation for these meetings. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop data systems further to ensure the progress of individual children is recorded and closely monitored. Staff are not yet tracking wider achievement and the development of children's skills.

Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to develop further the accuracy of teacher's professional judgements about children's attainment. Teachers are beginning to increase their understanding of national standards through engagement in moderation activities. Their participation in writing moderation activities with associated school's group colleagues in November 2023 is beginning to support this development.

Attainment is strongest at early level. The majority of children are on track to achieve the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) by the end of this session in listening, talking and

reading. Most children are expected to achieve early level in writing and numeracy. The number of children attaining early level numeracy has increased since the original inspection.

Fewer children are expected to attain CfE first level than at the original inspection. This reflects the significant number of children who require additional support with their learning at this stage. Predicted levels of attainment are lower than the Midlothian and national averages. Around a quarter of children are expected to achieve first level in listening and talking. Even fewer children are expected to achieve expected levels in reading and numeracy. The professional judgement that the majority of children will achieve first level writing is not yet sufficiently robust.

At second level, attainment has improved since the original inspection. The majority of children are expected to achieve CfE second level in listening and talking, writing and numeracy. Around a half of children are on track to achieve second level in reading.

Overall, the majority of children are on track to achieve expected levels of attainment in listening and talking. Across all stages, children's progress needs to improve. In particular, children would benefit from developing their skills in listening and responding more appropriately to others in more respectful ways. Children should develop further the ability to take turns and contribute at the appropriate time when engaging with others. The quality of the presentation of children's work across the school should be improved.

Staff welcome the significant review and reorganisation of literacy and numeracy resources, and the provision of additional reading materials. This is supporting them to plan and deliver learning activities more efficiently. Staff are still not yet skilled sufficiently in how to develop and improve children's literacy skills despite the introduction of new literacy programmes. The professional learning and resources provided to staff to support the introduction of new literacy programmes were insufficient to ensure their successful implementation. As a result, there is inconsistency in their use. Staff require further professional learning and clearer guidance to ensure these contribute to raising attainment.

Senior leaders have secured the services of a range of partners to inform and enhance identified strategies to raise attainment. Staff from Midlothian's Raising Attainment Team are providing valuable support to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Raising Attainment Team members work effectively in partnership with staff to plan, moderate, teach and assess children's progress. As a result, staff are becoming better at identifying those children who have the potential to achieve more with additional support. Team members also provide a range of targeted supports to raise attainment, particularly at P2, P4 and P7. As a result, preparation to provide targeted support for P2 phonics has begun. The pace of progress in reading at P4 is increasing. At P7, the planning and structure of numeracy lessons is improving.

Strategies to improve children's attendance are leading to improvement, enabling children to engage more frequently in learning activities. For example, senior leaders use of robust monitoring procedures and the provision of support to families is leading to improved attendance. For the first time, attendance levels have overtaken the Midlothian average. The school's multi-disciplinary team has successfully delivered a range of interventions designed to

meet the specific needs of individuals. The attendance of boys has improved through the provision of activities specifically designed to meet their interests.

All staff in the nursery continue to know children's social and emotional needs very well and provide opportunities for children to feel safe and secure. Adult interactions are nurturing and supportive and this approach supports children well to make progress in their learning. The recently formed team is at the early stages of building and embedding the processes in place across the school and nursery class to raise children's attainment and secure children's progress. Records of children's progress do not yet contain enough information on children's attainment over time.

Due to staffing challenges, learning environments across the three nursery playrooms were reviewed by practitioners to keep children safe and engaged in their learning. Children's restricted access to one room, and limited opportunities for engaging learning in the outdoors, limit children's learning experiences. Throughout the day as instances of challenging behaviour increase, children's levels of concentration decrease which affects individual children's progress. Staff should ensure that learning environments motivate children to progress in their learning.

The process for assessing and reporting on children's progress in the nursery now takes greater account of whole school approaches to planning learning and seeking parents' views. Practitioners track children's coverage of the early level curriculum on an ongoing basis and link this well with each child's individual targets. Parents welcome the recently introduced 'physical journals' that enable them to see what their child is learning across a range of contexts. Practitioners now need to monitor these journals to ensure that they demonstrate children's progress. In addition, practitioners should ensure that children in the nursery can access records of their learning independently.

In the nursery, the majority of children make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy. However, approaches to raising attainment in the nursery class are not embedded within the whole school approach to quality assurance. Attendance and children's progress over time in the nursery is not monitored or reported upon within the whole school analysis. As a result, data does not provide clarity on children's progress over time across the early level and into P1.

Overall, very limited progress has been made to raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school. However, important work has been undertaken to improve staff's understanding and use of attainment data. Effective partnership working with Midlothian's Raising Attainment Team is supporting the development of strategies to raise attainment.

Area for Improvement 2

Ensure children benefit from consistently high-quality learning and teaching, which includes increasing opportunities for children to lead their own learning.

Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:

This session, the acting headteacher and senior leadership team have had a relentless focus on improving the climate for learning across the school. They recognised the need to improve

relationships across the school and to increase a significant number of children's readiness to learn. They have taken successful steps to address these issues. For example, working with the staff, they developed a whole-school approach to nurture, improved the learning environment across the school and met the needs of learners more effectively. The senior leadership team lead by example in the positive way they interact with learners and strive to improve learning experiences for all.

Senior leaders, supported very well by local authority officers, have taken forward significant improvements to the way nurture is promoted across the school. A multi-disciplinary team, including the principal teacher, youth worker, home-school practitioner, early years practitioner and learning assistants, collaborate well to provide a range of targeted interventions and support. These include, for example, mindfulness sessions, sporting activities, dance, art and a life skills programme. Staff have also made improvements to the way the enhanced class is organised. They are ensuring that learning within the enhanced class is more aligned with children's main classwork.

The nurture team collaborate well to identify which specific groups or programmes would best meet the needs of their learners. Their practice is trauma informed. The team are led well by the deputy headteacher and principal teacher. In the last few terms, senior leaders changed the way the nurture programme is organised and delivered. As a result, a significant number of children are now benefitting from very effective support. There are early indications that this new approach is having a very positive impact on children's emotional wellbeing and learning. For example, all children who access nurture support are now able to spend more extended periods of time in their own classes. Children are also demonstrating a more positive attitude to learning and displaying greater resilience in classes. Staff within the nurture team support each other very well and recognise that they also need to look after each other's wellbeing. They value the support they receive from senior leaders.

Teachers understanding of strategies to support children with social and emotional barriers to learning has improved. More children benefit from safer, nurturing classroom environments where they can enjoy uninterrupted learning. The nurture team helped to establish calm learning zones in each of the school's atrium spaces. Children access these areas when they need a quiet, calm and relaxing space. Children are effectively using these new calm zones to help regulate their behaviour. Staff across the school also now provide children with a soft start session at the beginning of each day. As a result, children present as more settled and engage better in learning experiences throughout the day. These sessions also help children to form more positive relationships with their peers.

Across the school, staff have taken positive steps to improve the learning environment both within and outwith classrooms. Displays of children's work are attractive and clearly celebrate children's achievements. The headteacher has secured additional funding to improve the quality and number of resources across the school to support improved learning and teaching.

Senior staff continue to support the staff team in improving the quality of learning and teaching across the school. In the majority of classes, children engage well in their learning. Where this is most successful, the pace of learning is brisk, and staff provide appropriate challenge and

support for children. In a few classes, staff need to make better use of classroom management strategies to ensure that children do not disrupt other children's learning.

The majority of teachers share the purpose of learning well with children at the start of lessons. They also share with children how to be successful in their learning. These are helping children to understand more fully how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The majority of children now talk about what they are learning. Children are less confident in identifying their strengths and areas for development. Staff need to provide children with more opportunities to reflect on their learning. There are positive examples of children leading aspects of their learning. Now that relationships between children are improving, staff should develop these opportunities further for children to be involved in assessing their own learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop further staff's understanding and use of the 'Lawfield Way' to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning.

There are a few examples of teachers making use of questioning well to check on children's understanding and extend learning. Teachers need to make this a more consistent feature of lessons across the school. Most children benefit from kind relationships with staff. Most teachers make good use of praise to promote a positive learning climate in their classes.

The acting headteacher collaborated appropriately with the staff team to improve their approaches to planning. Teachers now take better account of CfE experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. Staff now plan in a more streamlined and focused way. They ensure greater clarity about what children are expected to learn and how this will be assessed. Staff now use Midlothian progression pathways for all areas across the curriculum. This is supporting children to build on prior learning more effectively. Teachers value the regular opportunities they now have to plan learning together within stages.

Staff across the school are becoming increasingly reflective of their practice. They demonstrate an enthusiasm in improving learning and teaching. They participate in a wide range of professional learning opportunities which help them better support the needs of learners. It would be helpful for staff to collaborate with each other more regularly to review and evaluate the implementation and impact of new initiatives and developments.

At the early level, staff are improving the ways they promote learning through play. They have significantly improved the spaces both in the atrium and classrooms. Children now have ready access to a range of inviting play spaces. As a result, children now access more appropriate resources to be curious and creative. Staff have undertaken a range of useful professional learning activities and visited other schools which help to develop their practice.

Overall, significant steps have been taken to ensure children's readiness to learn. Staff are now well-placed to increase their focus on improving and ensuring the provision of much improved learning and teaching.

Area for Improvement 3

Improve assessment approaches across the primary stages. Ensure all teaching staff use information gathered from children's learning and assessment activity more effectively to plan learning experiences which meet the needs of all children.

Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:

Teacher's assessment approaches across the primary classes are now more cohesive and integral to planning learning and teaching. Staff now capture information about children's progress more effectively. Staff across the primary stages continue to implement and embed the 'inclusive learning, teaching and assessment policy'. This policy is increasingly understood by staff and supports their use of both formative and summative assessment to evidence children's progress. Children are beginning to talk about their learning and what they need to do to succeed.

Senior leaders continue to use quality assurance processes well to evaluate children's progress in the primary classes. Their planning formats are more streamlined and show progressive learning pathways across all areas of the curriculum. They have regular meetings and professional dialogue sessions with staff which focus appropriately on moderating standards through robust evidence gathering of children's achievements. This leadership and direction provided by senior leaders is beginning to impact positively on teachers' professional judgement of CfE levels.

The targeted support in place across the primary classes through the support for learning and nurture unit is developing very well and meaningfully alongside the improvements in universal support. Children requiring support are identified through senior leaders and class teachers reviewing assessment information about individual children. Senior leaders should continue to monitor and develop a cohesive approach to the removal of barriers to learning. They should ensure children in the nursery class and all primary stages receive well-planned interventions that lead to positive outcomes.

Overall, staff have made a very positive start to improving assessment and meeting the needs of children. They should continue to build on the work undertaken this session, ensuring that effective assessment accurately informs planned learning to meet the needs of all learners.

Safeguarding

Senior leaders should:

- continue to take steps to ensure that all staff and partners understand their responsibilities as set out in the school's safeguarding and child-protection policies;
- continue to address the issues related to bullying and child safety that were raised by children, staff and parents during the inspection process;
- ensure that all staff complete wellbeing concern forms accurately to ensure consistency of reporting in accordance with school procedures; and

- review how the recording of incidents is recorded to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.

Staff's successful development of nurture approaches across the school has resulted in a noticeable reduction in dysregulated behaviour. Children requiring support with behaviour become more regulated quicker than before. The frequency of children absconding from class has significantly reduced. Children at risk of exclusion have improved Midlothian Learners Plans. Planning is continuing with partner services to further support children at risk of exclusion. Overall, the school is a calmer place. As a result, children are beginning to engage more effectively in their learning.

Strengths and progress identified during the visit:

As a result of the skilful leadership of the acting headteacher, an improved ethos and culture are evident across the school.

Local authority officers and the acting headteacher correctly identified the need to improve the culture and ethos of the school as a matter of urgency. Significant progress has been made to improve behaviour, relationships and the learning environment since the arrival of the acting headteacher in August 2023.

The physical environment of the school has improved. The introduction of nurture spaces across the school enables children to access quiet, calm spaces easily. Attractive wall displays are now evident in corridors. Children are proud to see their work displayed for others to enjoy. School assemblies have been re-established and are contributing to the development of a stronger sense of community across the school.

The acting headteacher has ensured more effective systems and processes are in place to support a wide range of aspects of the school's work. This has included the streamlining and simplification of curriculum planning and administrative procedures. Staff welcome the clarity this provides.

In consultation with local authority officers, the acting headteacher has identified a reduced number of key priorities for improvement. Staff have increased clarity about improvement priorities and is supporting an increasing pace of change. Communication across the staff team is improving. The re-scheduling of staff meetings to a Friday morning enables more staff to attend. Staff, particularly the support staff, now work more effectively as a team. Senior leaders should now ensure nursery staff become more integral to the wider school team. Building on this very positive start, senior leaders should now review and improve the approaches used to communicate with parents.

What happens next?

The school is beginning to make progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Midlothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Midlothian Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.