



Cabinet  
Tuesday, 5 March 2024  
Item No 5.9

## **Sacred Heart PS Post Inspection Progress update**

**Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer**

**Report for Information**

### **1 Recommendations**

Note the content of the report and the progress made towards improving the quality of education provision for children.

### **2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary**

This report outlines the progress the school has made to improve the quality of education since the original inspection carried out by Education Scotland which was communicated in the HMIE report May 2023. Education Scotland's report is attached as Appendix B.

**Date January 2024**

**Report Contact: Julie Fox  
Quality Improvement Manager**

[julie.fox@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:julie.fox@midlothian.gov.uk)

### 3 Background

Sacred Heart is a Roman Catholic primary school with a non-denominational early learning and childcare (ELC) setting in Penicuik. The roll is currently 125 and the school is staffed by an acting head teacher (the substantive depute head teacher), acting depute head teacher (the substantive principal teacher), acting principal teacher and 5 class teachers.

The roll in the ELC is 20 at the present time and is staffed by a senior early years practitioner (SEYP), and 3 early years practitioners (EYPs).

Sacred Heart was inspected on 27 February – 3 March 2023. This was a full model inspection which normally takes place over a week. The inspection of Sacred Heart RC PS was disrupted by two days of teacher strike action during the inspection week. The report, summarised inspection findings and additional evidence were published by Education Scotland 9th May 2023.

His Majesty's Inspectors inspected and provided evaluations for the Quality Indicators (QI) as indicated below:

#### Early Learning and Childcare

QI 1.3 Leadership of change: satisfactory

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment: satisfactory

QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion: satisfactory

QI3.2 Securing children's progress: satisfactory

#### Primary School

QI 1.3 Leadership of change: weak

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment: weak

QI3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion: weak

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement: weak

Four areas for improvement were identified for the school and ELC;

1. *Staff should work together to ensure all children experience high quality learning and teaching. In doing so, staff should improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment and ensure all children receive their entitlement to a broad curriculum.*
2. *Teachers should continue to work together to raise attainment. They should increase their understanding of national expectations about what children can achieve across all areas of the curriculum.*
3. *Staff should improve approaches to how they monitor children's progress in learning. They should use information on children's progress more effectively to raise attainment and improve how children's needs are met across the school and nursery.*

4. *Staff should improve the quality of learning through play across the early level.*

### **3.1 Support**

The Quality Improvement Manager (QIM) and other central education officers worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff to create an action plan to address the areas for improvement.

Staff development time was adjusted in the summer term to focus on and progress the required improvement actions. The in-service day May 2023 was also used to focus on planning quality learning, teaching and assessment and quality learning experiences in classrooms.

Supporting staff health and wellbeing was a priority as the outcome of the inspection had affected staff confidence and it was essential to ensure all staff were able to and could fully engage with the required pace of change and improvement.

The central Early Years Principal Teacher (EYs PT) worked with the ELC setting on transition plans and support for children starting P1 in August 2023.

The QIM continues to provide support and oversees support provided by other key colleagues including the numeracy raising attainment officer. The ELC setting has also continued to receive ongoing support from an EYs PT to develop play across early level. Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor has also provided support with Pupil Equity Fund planning. Further support has been provided by our Raising Attainment lead officer with a review of the school's attainment tracking system, introduction of a new data dashboard and understanding and analysis of data.

The school will continue to receive intensive support to make the required improvements.

### **3.2 Progress towards areas for improvement**

1. *Staff should work together to ensure all children experience high quality learning and teaching. In doing so, staff should improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment and ensure all children receive their entitlement to a broad curriculum.*

Senior leaders and teachers have developed new approaches to planning children's learning. This is helping teachers to support children to make better progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy.

Children are now receiving their entitlement to a broad curriculum offer and this is monitored by senior leaders in termly planning meetings and beginning to improve the learning experiences in the majority of classes.

2. *Teachers should continue to work together to raise attainment. They should increase their understanding of national expectations about what children can achieve across all areas of the curriculum.*

3. *Staff should improve approaches to how they monitor children's progress in learning. They should use information on children's progress more effectively to raise attainment and improve how children's needs are met across the school and nursery.*

Recent attainment meetings show improved attainment across almost all classes. The acting head teacher has improved how she gathers and uses data to understand better the progress children are making. A tracking system has been updated and is used alongside the newly introduced data dashboards.

Attainment meetings are held with senior leaders and staff on a termly basis and class information is analysed and discussed. Data driven dialogue is at the forefront of attainment meetings. Attainment meetings are linked to tracking periods at which plans are made in relation to support and challenge and interventions considered if necessary. Weekly meetings are also held with the support for learning teacher and class teachers to ensure plans are flexible to need.

Staff professional learning sessions have been held in September 2023 and January 2024 in relation to use of the data dashboard. Moderation sessions are also in place and teachers' professional judgements are becoming more reliable as a result of their professional learning.

Further information on improved attainment can be found in Appendix C.

4. *Staff should improve the quality of learning through play across the early level.*

The new approaches to planning learning at early level are ensuring appropriate core provision is in place in the learning environment. Observations and assessment activities are enabling play and learning experiences to better meet the needs of learners. The curriculum progression pathways are now being used to build on prior learning and support professional dialogue about shared expectations and progress through early level.

Staff in P1 and ELC are beginning to work collaboratively, and most children continue to build on their early communication and language and numeracy skills through their play.

### **3.3 Next steps**

The school receives continued support from the QIM with the central EYs PT working alongside teachers in P1 and P2 to support classroom organisation and planning effective learning and teaching.

Regular support will also continue for the ELC setting and a 10-week block of support for all teachers will be provided by the literacy raising attainment officer.

An experienced depute will be deployed to Sacred Heart RC PS from the February break until the summer when permanent appointments will be made to the management team. This depute will provide targeted support for the middle stages and work alongside the head teacher supporting class teachers.

#### 4 Report Implications

The school shows early signs of improvement in most areas since the inspection in February 2023.

However, greater consistency in the quality of teaching remains an area of focus to ensure that all children can make good progress and attain well.

The acting headteacher has continued to show commitment to the school, built her relationship with the staff team and systematically delivered actions in the improvement plan.

The Quality Improvement Team will continue to support the school and a follow up review visit will take place at the end of February prior to Education Scotland's return visit.

##### 4.1 Resource

QIM support, Raising Attainment team support and central EYs PT support.

##### 4.2 Digital

There are no Digital implications.

##### 4.3 Risk

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 (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

##### 4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

#### Explanation of terms of quality used by Education Scotland

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

#### Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Inspection Report

## Appendix C – Attainment Update

### APPENDIX A – Report Implications

#### A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

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

#### 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**

As noted within.

### **A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

As noted within.

## **A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

The setting will continue to improve its work in line with the inspection action plan and school improvement plan and the Quality Improvement team from the Education Service 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 Standards in Scotlands Schools Act 2000 sets out the duties placed on education authorities 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.

## **A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.



## Appendix B – Inspection Report

9 May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Sacred Heart 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.

- Steps taken by the acting headteacher to refocus the work of the school on raising attainment and improving learning and teaching.
- Children who behave well and are pleasant, articulate and keen to learn. They respond well to the Sacred Heart awards at assembly.
- The nurturing approach of practitioners in the nursery. The nursery team support children to feel secure, confident and increasingly independent in their learning.

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

- Staff should work together to ensure all children experience high quality learning and teaching. In doing so, staff should improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment and ensure all children receive their entitlement to a broad curriculum.
- Teachers should continue to work together to raise attainment. They should increase their understanding of national expectations about what children can achieve across all areas of the curriculum.
- Staff should improve approaches to how they monitor children's progress in learning. They should use information on children's progress more effectively to raise attainment and improve how children's needs are met across the school and nursery.
- Staff should improve the quality of learning through play across the early level.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#) 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 Sacred Heart Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Securing children’s progress	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland What happens next?](#)

As a result of our inspection findings, we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. 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 one year 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/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Sadie Cushley

**HM Inspector**

## **Appendix C Information from new data dashboard December 23**

Whole school combined data

Children who are on track to achieve expected levels in literacy and numeracy, combined at P1, P4 and P7 by June 2024

Information taken after initial tracking period in October 23.

	On track to attain	Not on track	Stretch aim
Combined literacy	64.5%	35.5%	63%
Combined numeracy	82.3%	17.7%	73%

**This data shows improvement in both literacy and numeracy from June 23**

### **Summary Jan 24**

P1 showing dip against predicted outcomes, teacher continues to work with EYs PT and regular evaluative attainment dialogues held.

P2 showing upward trend in attainment in writing, teacher continues to work with EYs PT and regular evaluative attainment dialogues held.

P3 showing upward trend in attainment in almost all areas.

P4 showing upward trend in attainment in almost all areas.

P5 showing upward trend in attainment in majority of areas.

P6 attainment maintained at good level in almost all areas.

P7 showing upward trend in attainment in majority of areas.

	<b>P1</b> (23 learners)	Stretch Aim 23/24	<b>P2</b> Jan 2024 (17 learners)	<b>P3</b> Jan 2024 (9 learners)	<b>P4</b> Jan 2024 (19 learners)	Stretch Aim 23/24	<b>P5</b> Jan 2024 (20 learners)	<b>P6</b> Jan 2024 (14 learners)	<b>P7</b> Jan 2024 (23 learners)	Stretch Aim 23/24
<b>Literacy Overall</b>	48%	68%	59%	66%	68%	55%	45%	86%	65%	60%
<b>L&amp;T</b>	74%	79%	82%	100%	84%	65%	65%	93%	91%	65%
<b>Reading</b>	65%	72%	65%	78%	84%	68%	50%	93%	70%	70%

<b>Writing</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Numeracy</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>65%</b>