

Follow up Inspection of Lawfield Primary School

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer, Children, Young People and Partnerships

Report for Information

1 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the content of the inspection follow through report.
- (ii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.
- (iii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with Lawfield Primary 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 in January 2023.

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Report Contact: Annabel Bates, Quality Improvement Manager

E-mail: annabel.bates@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 In June 2020, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lawfield Primary School and Nursery Class – outlining the outcomes of an inspection of the school in December 2019. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which were agreed with the school and Midlothian Council. HM Inspectors returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in January 2022. In January 2023 HM Inspectors visited the school again. The letter in response to this recent visit is now published on the Education Scotland website and is available from this [link](#).

3.2 Education Scotland is responsible for inspecting education settings throughout Scotland.
As this was a follow up inspection the focus was on areas for development from the original inspection.

- Raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school.
- Ensure children benefit from consistently high quality learning and teaching, which includes increasing opportunities for children to lead their own learning.
- 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.

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

Within the nursery, children demonstrate a strong sense of wellbeing and are making appropriate progress. They are enthusiastic learners who are nurtured well by practitioners who know and understand their learning needs. Children continue to build on their early communication and language skills through their play. Practitioners have improved how they include early mathematics and numeracy in children's play.

Teachers at the early level in school have introduced daily play sessions and children socialise well with each other whilst playing.

Overall, the quality of children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics in the school has improved since the original inspection in December 2019. This is particularly evident at second level.

Senior leaders have improved how they gather and use data to understand better the progress children are making. Teachers' professional judgements are becoming more reliable as a result of their professional learning.

Senior leaders and practitioners have created a nurturing, stimulating learning environment in the nursery which enables children to engage much more deeply in their play. Play spaces promote independent learning in early language and mathematics. Practitioners continue to take part in relevant professional learning which is having a direct, positive impact on securing children's wellbeing and progress.

Teachers have taken part in professional learning about learning and teaching and have developed their agreed approach, known as the 'Lawfield Way.' It sets out shared expectations about what effective practice looks like.

Senior leaders and teachers have developed new approaches to planning children's learning. These are helping teachers to support children to make better progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy. Children are starting to make decisions about their learning.

There are positive relationships between adults and children in almost all classes. Staff use nurturing approaches to support children's wellbeing and to promote positive behaviour. They work effectively with a range of partners to help meet children's needs.

The recently introduced 'Open Curriculum' morning is giving children the opportunity to use a range of skills and have choice in their learning.

Teachers and senior leaders have made positive progress over the past year to improve how they measure children's progress across the primary stages. They have developed the 'inclusive learning and teaching policy' and have worked with colleagues in Lawfield Primary and other schools to develop their practice. Teachers now use a new approach to successfully identify children's strengths and plan future learning.

In the majority of classes, teachers provide helpful feedback on children's learning. This is supporting children to begin to understand their progress and identify their next steps.

Children in the school and nursery can identify and share aspects of their learning using recently introduced online learning journals.

3.4 The following areas for improvement were identified and Education Scotland will liaise with Midlothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve.

Senior leaders and teachers must now take immediate action to improve the quality of activities on offer to help children make better progress with their learning in early level.

There is a need to improve the overall quality of learning and teaching and address very high levels of absence to help raise attainment further.

Senior leaders must now continue to ensure that data about children's progress in learning is accurate.

Staff in the school should now ensure that all classrooms and shared learning spaces are attractive and motivating and support independent learning.

Teachers must now apply their agreed approach (Lawfield Way) more consistently in all classes. They also need to make better use of all the teaching time that is available within the school day.

Teachers now need to consistently give children regular opportunities to influence what and how they learn across the curriculum. They must also ensure that all children at all stages have their entitlement to a full curriculum, including two hours of physical education every week.

Senior leaders and teachers should continue to build on the open curriculum approach and help children to understand the skills they can develop and improve through their participation.

Senior leaders should consider how best to record all of the assessment information that is gathered.

Teachers need to ensure that all children across the school benefit from regular high quality feedback on their learning.

It will be important to develop the online learning journal approach and ensure that parents have a full understanding of what their children are learning and how they can support this.

3.5 Conclusion

The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection, Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of publication of the most recent letter. An action plan has been put in place by the head teacher, in partnership with the Midlothian Council education team.

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 (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Inspection Report

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 Danderhall Primary 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 [link](#)