

Inspection of Paradykes Primary School and Nursery Class

Report by Maria Lloyd, Acting 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 22 January 2019.

2 Background

2.1 Paradykes Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected in November 2018. The report was published on 22 January 2019. 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. The visit had a specific focus on raising attainment and achievement and how the school is addressing the need to close the equity gap; and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This inspection was a full version, meaning that QIs 1.3, 3.1 and 3.2 were a key focus. Education Scotland published a statement about the confidence they had in the school's capacity for improvement. Noted below are the evaluations for Paradykes Primary School and Nursery Class:

School

QI 1.3 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Good
QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Good
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

Nursery Class

QI 1.3 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Good
QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Very Good
QI 3.2 Securing Children's Progress	Good

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

- The effective leadership of the headteacher together with the depute headteacher in creating a caring and inclusive ethos. The welcoming environment where, staff, partners, parents and children feel valued.
- The energetic children who value play, are keen to be actively involved and take increasing responsibility for their learning.

- The school's capacity to continually improve through strong teamwork between teachers, practitioners, support staff and partners.
- The clear understanding of the needs of children and their families leading to children's readiness to learn and improved wellbeing.

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

- Continue to develop robust approaches to assessment leading to consistency in high quality learning and teaching.
- Continue to evaluate the school's improvement initiatives and raise attainment and achievement for all.

2.5 Background factors as outlined by the local authority

This inspection took place in the Head Teacher's second last week in post. He had been in post for 7 years, and during that time had supported the school to move into its new building, the Loanhead Centre and led it to being the first school in Midlothian to achieve the Level One Nurturing Schools Award.

A new Head Teacher has now been appointed who will continue to lead the school on its improvement journey, with a particular focus on 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement. Her start date has not yet been negotiated, and the school currently has an Acting Head Teacher, who is the substantive Depute Head Teacher.

2.6 Conclusion

As outlined in the inspection letter, Education Scotland is 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 return to the school with regard to this particular inspection.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

A Schools Group Manager will continue to directly support the school to improve attainment and achievement in particular. This action will also be in the school's improvement plan and will be monitored through the quality assurance process.

3.2 Risk

Education Scotland visits 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 School Group Managers and Senior Education Managers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of any school to demonstrate its capacity to improve. In the case of this report, the school will continue to receive the same level of support as other schools as detailed in the 3-18 Improvement Team's quality assurance calendar. This will ensure that the school continues to improve.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

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

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The setting will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education Service will continue to challenge and support the setting 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) Congratulate the staff, pupils and parents on the positive outcome of this inspection.
- (iii) Note the key strengths outlined in the report.
- (ii) Note the significant areas for improvement.
- (iii) Note that Education Scotland will not return to the school with regard to this particular inspection.
- (iv) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

04 February 2019

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 (Attached).