

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 21 NOVEMBER 2017.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Pauline Clark, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Peter Heggie, Carl John, Tom Kerr (substituting for Damian Timson), Dave King & Andrew Miller; Appointed Representative Myra Macpherson and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

Apologies – Councillors Chris Horne, Charles Kennedy, Moira Shemilt and Damian Timson; Appointed Representatives Lynne McEwen and Margaret Russell.

Absent – Councillor George Paul

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 – VSE Inveralmond Community High School

Councillor Dodds declared a non-financial interest due to his son being employed as a teacher at Inveralmond Community High School.

Councillor Miller declared a non-financial interest due to him being a member of Inveralmond Community High School Parent Council.

2. MINUTE

The Committee confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 21 September 2017 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

Matters Arising

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Noted the update from the Depute Chief Executive advising that the summary of the inspection findings had recently been received from Education Scotland in relation to Blackburn Primary School, which would be reported to the next meeting of the committee scheduled to be held on 30 January 2018.

3. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: LONGRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at Longridge Primary School.

The Education Officer, Maureen McNaughton, advised the Committee that the VSE was carried out in April 2017. The Head Teacher, Nicola Hamilton, had joint Headship with Woodmuir Primary School. The school had a clear understanding of its strengths and the actions required to be taken to have an impact on learners. Ensuring wellbeing, equality and

inclusion in school was assessed as being a major strength. Encouraging all stakeholders to contribute to improvement by working collaboratively and efficiently provided a positive impact on improvement and the school was commended for its collaborative approaches and working practices. Expectations were high and strong processes were in place to raise attainment.

The Head Teacher, Nicola Hamilton, then advised that the focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership of change;
- Raising attainment and achievement; and
- Arrangements for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

Ms Hamilton outlined the actions arising following the VSE. She stated that she found the VSE process to be a positive experience for staff and had clear indications of how to progress the actions arising to ensure further improvement in attainment and achievement for all learners. The school had a strong pupil council and children were given the opportunity to engage in discussions in their learning. Ongoing development of approaches to profiling to enhance learners understanding received positive feedback from parents. Staff continued to refine and evidence creative and innovative ways to engage learners in developing skills for learning, life and work including the wider use of digital technologies.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the committee. In response to a question relating to the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) Allocation of £9,600 received by the school, she confirmed that the same amount of funding was received by Woodmuir Primary School. Both schools assessed the needs of the children and the interventions required to support children in their writing and developing numeracy. Staff were also working with Edinburgh University to develop reading activities.

The Committee acknowledged the positive report and commended staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, for the excellent work carried out in school.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report and the school's arrangements for continuing improvement.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher and Education Officer.

## 4. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: WOODMUIR PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the outcome of the VSE carried out at

### Woodmuir Primary School.

The Education Officer, Maureen McNaughton, stated that at the time of the VSE being carried out the total school roll was 23. The school had a strong learning culture with a variety of targeted interventions in place to meet the needs of all learners, supporting improved attainment and achievement for those children who faced challenges with a strong focus on health and wellbeing. Members of staff worked with cluster colleagues to raise attainment and were clear about the role they played in meeting the needs of all learners and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Children also felt that their voices were being heard and had a sense of belonging.

The Focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership of change;
- Raising attainment and achievement; and
- Arrangements for ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

The Head Teacher, Nicola Hamilton, then advised the Committee of the following actions which arose following the VSE:

- Work would continue to develop approaches to measuring the impact of improvements on learners;
- Review arrangements for profiling learners' achievements to support learners understanding of their key strengths and their next steps in learning; and
- Extend the opportunities for children to lead learning through further peer support and peer tutoring.

In response to a question from the Committee relating to cluster working between schools, Ms Hamilton advised that there was excellent collaboration between staff at Woodmuir and Longridge Primary Schools and the wider cluster, sharing information and providing a learning and supportive experience for staff and pupils.

Finally, it was noted that the school has a good reputation within the community and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The VSE team was confident that the school's arrangements for self-evaluation would continue to lead to improvement and raised attainment for learners.

The Committee acknowledged the strong report which reflected the excellent work carried out in school and thanked the Head Teacher and staff for their hard work. The collaborative approach with Longridge Primary School under the joint Headship of Ms Hamilton was leading to improvements and raised attainment for learners.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report and the school's arrangements for continuing improvement.

### Decision

Noted the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher and Education Officer.

## 5. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation carried out at Inveralmond Community High School.

The Senior Development Officer, Catrina Hatch, advised the Committee that the strong relationship between staff and pupils has enabled the school to sustain an aspirational vision. Senior leaders within the school provided strong leadership which has enable the school to develop and sustain improved outcomes. Staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context, working with a wide range of partners within the school community to ensure positive outcomes for all learners. Staff have a good relationship with parents providing increased opportunities for engagement in their child's learning. Effective strategies were available for young people facing challenges with tracking and monitoring systems in place to help with early intervention.

The report confirmed that the focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership and management;
- Learning provision; and
- Successes and achievement.

The Head Teacher, Suzie Young, stated that staff found the VSE process to be beneficial. She then outlined the actions arising from the VSE highlighting the key priorities for improvement which would be incorporated into school improvement planning over the next two years. Staff would continue to develop the BGE ensuring pace and challenge for all learners and further develop the tracking and monitoring system within the BGE. Maths strategies were also in place to support staff to ensure continued improvements.

In response to a question from members of the Committee regarding school attendance, the Head Teacher provided an update of the plans in place to improve attendance at school. Back to school interviews were being carried out working within a person centred approach and staff were working in partnership with parents and carers to help increase attendance. It was acknowledged that attendance at school was a critical factor to ensure children's attainment.

The Parent Council Chair, Maria McAuley, confirmed that staff interacted well with children to improve attendance and it was positive to see the

children happy going back to school.

The Head Teacher then provided details of the impact of Pupil Equity Funding received by the school. Staff were working with stakeholders to assess the best way to use the funding with a steering group set up which included parents, pupils, staff and partners. The impact of the funding was being monitored and ongoing checks of data carried out to ensure improvements were being made. Youth workers and teachers were working together to support the children and a number of projects were underway to provide support in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being.

Finally, the Committee acknowledged the excellent report and outcomes following the VSE, particularly due to the size of the school roll and challenges faced by staff. The Committee thanked the Head Teacher and Parent Council Chair for providing an update.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report and the school's arrangements for continuing improvement.

#### Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher, Senior Development Officer and Parent Council Chair.

### 6. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: SIMPSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation carried out at Simpson Primary School.

The Education Officer, Phyllis Wood, stated that leadership at all levels in the school and ELC was strong. Effective self-evaluation, professional learning and understanding of local and national priorities have led to improved experiences and outcomes for learners. She advised the Committee that P7 cohorts outlined within the report were lower than normal for the school however excellent supports were in place to improve attainment and ninety percent of P7 pupils were on target to achieve expected levels for 2017/2018. The Education Officer was confident that the Head Teacher would continue to ensure improvements through effective leadership of the school.

The Head Teacher, Arlene Black, then advised that the focus of the VSE was on the validation of the schools' self-evaluation in key aspects of its work using indicators from How Good is our School? 4. Robust work was being carried out in school to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all children. Professional learning focused on improving experiences and outcomes for learners taking into account individual and whole school/ELC needs, based on effective self-evaluation which helped to secure whole school improvement. Pupil Equity Funding received by the school was used to target specific interventions with progress being

closely monitored and data collected. Staff were committed to improving attainment and life chances for all children in school.

The Committee thanked the Head Teacher for the update. It was noted that the VSE team had judged five out of the ten quality indicators as better than the judgements of the ELC and school. This was due to the evaluation reflecting the very positive impact of leadership for change and learning, particularly in the Early Learning Centre where the team saw model practice.

The Head Teacher also provided an update on the strategies in place to support the P7 year group. The majority of the children were working well and engaging with the additional pupil support. Work continued to further improve staff confidence in selecting and utilising a wider range of data to inform decision making about interventions to close the gaps. Staff were increasingly skilled in using data to identify next steps in learning and the support required for children.

During the course of the discussion it was agreed that future reports would include a list of all the team members involved in the VSE process.

The report provided a list of the actions arising following the VSE. The school's approaches to leadership for learning across the school were highly inclusive and the school demonstrated the capacity for effective self-evaluation which has had a positive impact on learners and their families. No further visits to the school were anticipated in relation to the VSE carried out.

The Committee was pleased with the report and commended staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, for their commitment in raising attainment and achievements for all children.

#### Decisions

1. To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher and Education Officer; and
2. To note that future reports would include a list of all the team members involved in the VSE process.

### 7. VALIDATED SELF-EVALUATION: EASTERTOUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation carried out at Eastertoun Primary School.

The Quality Improvement Manager, Greg Welsh, highlighted the key strengths of the school under the excellent leadership of the Head Teacher. Robust monitoring and tracking approaches were in place to maximise attainment and achievement. Staff have a clear, shared vision and a strong positive ethos for continuous improvement which reflected a commitment to children's rights.

The focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership of change;
- Raising attainment and achievement; and
- Arrangements for ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

The Head Teacher, Gerald Cowan, advised that a strategic overview leading to a shared understanding of the purpose and design of the curriculum was being developed with all stakeholders and children were involved in the process. Professional dialogue between management and staff about learners' progress and attainment was ongoing and staff continued to monitor and track attainment to ensure appropriate learning opportunities were planned and implemented to maximise attainment and achievement.

In response to a question from the Committee about the Pupil Equity Fund Allocation of £54,000, he confirmed that a major audit of children's needs was carried out across key areas in Numeracy and English to identify vulnerable groups and to assess what resources and supports could be implemented. Additional support staff were utilised and evidence has been gathered to confirm that the attainment gap within the groups identified has narrowed.

A question was asked about the limited space in school for the number of children on the school roll. The Head Teacher responded by providing an update on the ways staff were utilising space in school to maximise the opportunities for children.

The report outlined the actions arising from the VSE. Work would continue to develop a consistent whole school approach to identifying, discussing and evaluating next steps with learners, ensuring that all children were familiar with their targets and that these clearly impacted on learning and achievement.

The Committee was confident in the leadership of the Head Teacher and that the school's arrangements for improvements would continue to raise attainment for learners.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report and the school's arrangements for continuing improvement.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher and Quality Improvement Manager.

## 8. WORKPLAN 2017-2018

The Committee noted the workplan (copies of which had been circulated).

The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) then advised that inspection results had been received from Education Scotland for Pumpherston & Uphall Station Primary School and Ogilvie School Campus. It was proposed that both these schools be considered at the next meeting, as well as Blackburn Primary School. It was recommended that at least three of the VSE's included in the workplan for consideration at the meeting on 30 January 2018 be carried forward to a future meeting.

### Decisions

1. To note the workplan;
2. To agree that Education Scotland Inspection reports for Blackburn Primary School, Pumpherston & Uphall Station Primary School and Ogilvie School Campus be considered at the meeting scheduled to be held on 30 January 2018; and
3. To agree that at least three of the VSE's on the workplan for consideration at the meeting on 30 January 2018 be carried forward to a future meeting.