

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 20 JANUARY 2015.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Tony Boyle, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Carl John, Dave King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, George Paul and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives John Hendrie, Eric Lumsden, Lynne McEwen and Myra MacPherson.

Apologies – Councillor Alexander Davidson

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled under Standing Order 11, that agenda item 11 (Knightsridge Early Years Centre Progress Update) be considered following agenda item 4 (Minute).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTE

The Education (Quality Assurance) Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 18 November 2014. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

4. PROGRESS UPDATE: KNIGHTSRIDGE EARLY YEARS CENTRE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the progress made following the recommendations for improvement outlined in the February 2014 Education Scotland Inspection report on Knightsridge Early Years Centre, which was presented to the Committee at its meeting held on 11 March 2014.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that a return visit was carried out by Education Scotland on 11 November 2014. A letter was then published in January 2015, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report, which outlined the positive progress made by Knightsridge Early Years Centre towards addressing the recommendations from the initial inspection.

The Head Teacher and staff were supported by the Quality Improvement Team and Early Years Officers to address the actions arising from the Education Scotland Inspection in November 2013. Led by the Head Teacher, all staff worked collaboratively within the school, cluster and

other authority schools to address the actions required for improvement.

Members of staff provided a better range of opportunities for children to develop their early literacy skills and children were engaging more in their learning. Children who required extra help with their learning were also well supported. The Head Teacher and Principal Teacher made well-judged decisions about prioritising areas for improvement. The Committee was advised that the Head Teacher was highly committed to the centre and its children and has a clear and ambitious vision for taking the centre forward.

Allison Kennedy, Head Teacher, then responded to questions raised by members of the Committee advising that the development of the new provision for two-year olds has provided enhanced staffing levels. Parents were also taking a more active role and becoming more involved in their children's learning.

The Committee then acknowledged the positive progress made towards addressing the recommendations from the initial inspection.

The Committee was asked to note the contents of the letter published by Education Scotland in January 2015 following a return visit to the centre on 11 November 2014 and the positive progress towards addressing the recommendations from the initial inspection.

#### Decision

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

#### 5. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: ST PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST CALDER

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the action plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the Education Scotland report published on 4 November 2014, details of which were attached as appendices to the report.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that the Inspectors were satisfied with the overall quality of provision and were confident that the school's self-evaluation processes were leading to improvements. As a result, no further evaluation visits were required by Education Scotland.

Helen Torsney, Head Teacher, then advised the Committee that members of staff found the process to be a very positive experience. Staff were happy to engage in professional dialogue with the Inspectors and other members of staff. Inspectors found that the children in school and the nursery class were happy and enjoyed their learning experience. The Head Teacher agreed that the evaluations for the school were accurate however the evaluations for the nursery school were disappointing, which was due to staff changes at the time of the inspection. The school's action plan outlined the steps taken to ensure that improvements were being made in the school and nursery class. Pupils were also developing

on-line personal development plans and staff would continue to work collaboratively with parents, who had high expectations of the attainment levels in school.

During the course of the discussion a general recommendation was made by the Committee that more detailed information should be provided on future VSE reports in relation to page 2, point D, Background – Indicators relating to Attendance, Absence and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) results. The Head of Schools with Education Support agreed to provide this expanded information in relation to the performance indicators on future VSE reports to the Committee.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions raised by members of the Committee. The Committee noted that the following improvements would be taken forward to ensure continued improvement in the school and nursery class:

- To ensure whole school improvements had more impact on the nursery class;
- To build on existing approaches to assessment and monitoring so that children made clear progress in all subjects; and
- To continue with existing plans to develop the curriculum further.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair acknowledged the positive findings of the Education Scotland Inspection and the progress made by staff under the leadership of the Head Teacher.

#### Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teachers;
2. Endorsed the school's plan for improvement; and
3. Agreed that more detailed information would be provided on future VSE reports in relation to the background performance indicators as outlined above.

#### 6. PROGRESS UPDATE OF VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: WINCHBURGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the progress made following the recommendations for improvement outlined in the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) report presented to the Committee at its meeting of 2nd October 2014.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that at the Education Quality Assurance Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2014, it was noted that the findings of the VSE indicated that the school required to make significant improvements and that the Head Teacher

would be supported by the Quality Improvement team to achieve future improvement. The Committee requested a brief interim progress report prior to the return VSE scheduled for April 2015.

The Head Teacher and staff have addressed the actions arising from the VSE. Led by the Head Teacher, all staff worked collaboratively within the school, cluster and other authority schools to address the actions required for improvement.

Frances Rosevear, Head Teacher, advised members of the Committee that staff were enthusiastic about the progress made. All staff participated in professional discussion and evaluation of practice which has resulted in better knowledge and understanding of quality practice. Further details of the progress made were outlined in the report.

The Committee was satisfied with the interim report and the progress made.

The Committee was asked to note the contents of the interim progress report and note that a further report on the outcome of the return VSE scheduled to be held in April 2015 would be reported to the Committee in June 2015.

#### Decision

1. Noted the contents of the interim progress report and the update from the Head Teacher; and
2. Noted that a further report on the outcome of the action plan for the school and the nursery would be provided in June 2015.

### 7. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: BLACKBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at Blackburn Primary School. The focus of the VSE was:

- The effective learning and teaching that included pace and challenge;
- Assessment – built in assessment that included tracking and monitoring at whole school and individual teacher level; and
- Inclusion – equality and fairness.

It was noted that in all but two areas the VSE team validated the school's judgements about its performance in the primary classes. Curriculum and meeting learning needs had been re-evaluated through the VSE process. The nursery evaluations were validated in all aspects apart from Curriculum where it was judged to have moved from good to very good.

Janet Clarkson, Head Teacher, informed the Committee that staff found the VSE process to be a very effective self-evaluation tool. Members of

staff were committed to working collaboratively with others to ensure that improvements impacted on pupils' learning and attainment and more rigorous and systematic tracking and monitoring approaches were introduced. The school has a strong, inclusive school community and an active Parent Council which provides significant support to the school. Parents were included and involved in key decisions made within the school. The Head Teacher then responded to questions raised by members of the Committee.

In conclusion, the report advised that the school would review and update the Standards and Quality Report and School Improvement Plan in line with the VSE findings to ensure that there was a clear focus on developing effective learning and teaching within their curriculum review.

The Committee was satisfied with the VSE carried out and acknowledged the positive progress made by staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher.

It was recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report.

#### Decision

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

### 8. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: DEDRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support which provided details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out and the identified actions arising.

The report advised that the VSE was carried out in Dedridge Primary School in November 2014. The focus of the VSE related to:

- Learners' Experiences; and
- Meeting Learners' Needs.

The VSE validated the school's judgements about its performance in the school and nursery with the exception of meeting learners' needs in the nursery, which has improved since the inspection by Education Scotland in 2012 and has now been graded as good.

Fiona Hollands, Head Teacher, then advised the Committee that staff welcomed the opportunity to engage in the self-evaluation process. Leadership opportunities have been developed at all levels, which has had a positive impact on school improvement and staff continued to engage in quality professional dialogue to ensure a shared understanding of the curriculum. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and the team is confident that the school's self-evaluation was leading to improvements. Opportunities for outdoor learning were positively impacting on teaching and learning in the school and nursery and staff training would continue to ensure school improvement. Members

of staff continued to engage with parents to ensure that they were involved in their children's education. The school's Standards and Quality report has been updated in line with the VSE findings and staff would continue to implement rigorous and systematic tracking and monitoring approaches. The Head Teacher stated that she was confident that the school was taking the right steps to take forward school improvement.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members.

Members of the Committee then stated that they were satisfied that the school was addressing the issues highlighted in the VSE to take forward school improvement. A recommendation was made for a progress report to be brought back to the Committee in late summer/early autumn 2015 when further evidence would be available of progress made.

### Decision

- Noted the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher; and
- Agreed that a progress report would be submitted to the Committee in late summer/early autumn 2015.

## 9. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ARMADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at Armadale Primary School. The focus of the VSE was on:

- Self-evaluation for continuous improvement; and
- Developing the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence through various learning opportunities.

It was noted that in almost all areas the VSE team validated the school's judgements about its performance in the school and nursery with the exception of learners' experiences and curriculum in nursery. The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities to enable all pupils to develop the four curricular capacities and celebrates wider achievements.

Allison Phillips, Head Teacher, then informed the Committee that members of staff were pleased with the findings of the VSE report. The Standards and Quality Report and the School Improvement Plan would be reviewed in line with the VSE findings. The Head Teacher advised that she was confident that excellent progress was being made to ensure that improvements were taking place in school.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised the Committee that the Head Teacher would develop self-evaluation procedures to take more account of both the pupil voice and the views of the full range of stakeholders.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members advising that staff welcomed the self-evaluation process and were committed to improvement in school and to support and challenge pupils' learning and attainment in both the school and nursery.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair acknowledged the positive findings of the VSE and congratulated the staff team, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, on the excellent progress made.

#### Decision

- Noted the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher; and
- Noted the comments by members of the Committee on the positive findings of the VSE.

#### 10. WORKPLAN 2014-2015

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

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) then advised the Committee that there would be additional reports included on the workplan for the March and April 2015 meetings relating to secondary schools that had concluded their VSEs.

#### Decision

1. Agreed the contents of the workplan; and
2. Noted that there would be additional reports included on the workplan for the March and April 2015 meetings.