

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 10 MAY 2016.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Alexander Davidson, Jim Dixon (substituting for Tony Boyle), Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Carl John, Dave King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, George Paul and Jim Walker (substituting for Sarah King); Appointed Representative Margaret Russell and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

Apologies – Councillors Tony Boyle and Sarah King; Appointed Representatives Myra Macpherson and Lynne McEwen.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 9 – VSE: St Ninian's Primary School

Councillor Fitzpatrick declared a non-financial interest arising from him being the community representative on the Parent Council for St Ninian's Primary School.

2. MINUTE

The Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 15 March 2016 as being a correct record. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

3. UPDATED VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: WHITDALE EARLY YEARS CENTRE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the progress made on the implementation of the action plan for Whitdale Early Years Centre.

A Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) was carried out at Whitdale Early Years Centre on 28 April 2015 and a report submitted for consideration by the Committee at its meeting held on 2 June 2015. It was agreed that a further report on the progress made would be provided within twelve months. The focus of the VSE carried out on 8 March 2016 was to review the action plan and assess the impact of improvements on the quality of children's learning experiences.

The Head Teacher, Iain McDermott, advised that since the VSE carried out in April 2015 the Early Years Centre has made very good progress which was validated by the results of the quality indicators. All members of staff demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement and were well placed to take forward developments to support and challenge children's learning and achievement in the early years centre. Tracking and monitoring of the children's progress ensured that children were

supported and challenged in their learning. Staff were supported to participate in self-evaluation and professional development and contributed to continuing improvement through distributed leadership opportunities.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members confirming that the follow up VSE carried out was as rigorous as the VSE carried out in April 2015. A clear action plan was also in place to ensure continued improvements.

The Committee acknowledged the improved progress report and was confident that staff would continue to develop the children's learning experiences.

Decision

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

4. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: PINWOOD SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) which took place at Pinewood School. The focus of the VSE carried out was on recent work on embedding Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) within the curriculum and school procedures which focused on:

- How well did young people learn, develop and achieve?
- How well was the school improving the quality of their work?
- How well does the school work with its partners?

The report confirmed that the VSE validated the school's judgements about its evaluations in the school, with the exception of Learners' experiences which the team judged to be very good. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and members of staff were confident that the school's arrangements for self-evaluation would continue to lead to improvement.

The Head Teacher, Pamela Greig, advised the Committee that the VSE process highlighted that the leadership of the management team was found to be a strength of the school. Parents, staff and children were confident in the progress made by the school and members of staff were engaging in continuous professional development which has had a positive impact on the learning experiences for all young people. Parents felt supported and happy with the care provided to their children and there was a strong element of pupil voice at all stages of the school.

Wellbeing indicators had been introduced in a wide variety of child friendly ways so that children were aware how to keep safe, well and achieving. Pinewood school works in partnership with a wide range of agencies and community groups which provided a number of opportunities for the

children. The Head Teacher concluded by providing details of the actions arising from the VSE which included plans to continue to develop links with other schools within the cluster, authority and nationally and to develop and review the wellbeing plans and goal setting within GIRFEC. Development of the school's monitoring and tracking systems would be ongoing and staff would continue to involve parents in their children's learning and develop more pupil involvement in goal setting. The new extension being built at Pinewood School would also provide additional classrooms which would benefit the school.

The Committee acknowledged the positive findings within the VSE report and was satisfied with the actions being taken for continued improvements.

Decision

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

5. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: SEAFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at Seafield Primary School. The Committee noted apologies from the Head Teacher, Marjorie Morris, who was unable to attend the meeting. The focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership for improvement;
- Learning, teaching and assessment;
- Meeting learner's needs; and
- Partnership working.

The report confirmed that the VSE validated the school's judgements about its performance in the school and the nursery. There was clear evidence of continuous improvement and the VSE team recognised that the school would continue to move forward. All staff demonstrated commitment to improvement and were well placed to take forward developments to support and challenge pupils' learning and attainment in both the school and the nursery.

The Education Officer, Alan Miller, then advised the Committee that the staff team worked hard and were enthusiastic and motivated. Almost all pupils were polite, confident, well-behaved and very proud of their school. Pupils' progress was tracked and monitored with teachers making professional judgements about learner achievements.

Nursery staff were well supported and provided a broad range of learning experiences, based on play and active learning. Strong, positive relationships across the school community supported a rigorous programme of self-evaluation and quality improvement. Staff felt valued

and involved in all aspects of school life and were enthusiastic about professional learning activities and opportunities provided to enhance their personal development.

The Education Officer then provided details of the actions arising following the VSE. Staff would continue to review and develop the curriculum and support and develop distributed leadership and a shared ethos of responsibility for improvement. Staff would continue to develop parental, family and wider community involvement and would review and refresh the nursery literacy programme to reflect developments in the early years practice.

The Education Officer then responded to questions from members of the Committee providing an update on the school's performance information compared to West Lothian decile average.

The Committee acknowledged the findings of the VSE and congratulated staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, for the excellent work carried out in school.

Decision

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

6. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: STONEYBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

- The quality of care and education;
- Successes and achievements of learners; and
- The school's capacity for improvement.

The school was very well led and demonstrated a strong capacity for self-evaluation for self-improvement.

The Head Teacher, Kathleen Gibson, informed the Committee that staff from Stoneyburn Primary School worked in close partnership with staff and pupils from Greenrigg Primary School maximising opportunities for collaborative working for improvement across the two schools. One of the key strengths highlighted by the VSE was that the senior management team worked well together and staff were committed to raising attainment and delivering better outcomes for all learners. All staff engaged with professional development opportunities, using professional dialogue, which has improved learning and teaching. Parents were offered a wide range of opportunities to help them support their children. Feedback from parents has confirmed that they feel more confident in supporting their children at home. Children were also more confident about talking about

their learning experiences.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee and provided details of the areas highlighted for development following the VSE which were included in the school improvement plan.

The Committee congratulated the Head Teacher for the positive findings of the VSE.

Decision

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

7. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ST NINIAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at St Ninian's RC Primary School. The focus of the VSE was:

- The quality of leadership and approaches to improvement through self-evaluation;
- The quality of care and education offered by the school; and
- The extent to which the school was improving outcomes for all learners.

The VSE validated the school's judgements about its evaluations in the school, with the exception of learning, teaching and assessment (formerly learners' experiences) which was agreed to be very good. The nursery evaluations were also agreed with the exception of Improvements in Performance and Curriculum, both of which were judged to be very good.

The report advised that the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and staff were confident that the school's arrangements for self-evaluation would continue to lead to improvements. Tracking and monitoring of children's progress would be further developed to include all curricular areas with greater consistency in pace and challenge.

The Head Teacher, Lisamarie Purdie, informed the Committee that members of staff were committed to self-evaluation and improving outcomes for children. During the VSE process the quality indicators from the new How Good is our School? (4th Edition) (HGIOS 4) were used. Focus would continue to be made on how to develop approaches to meet the diverse needs of children and their families. Almost all the children in the school and nursery were happy, confident and highly motivated and participated enthusiastically in their learning.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee confirming that a shared understanding of standards of achievements would be further developed across the school and cluster

to ensure that teacher's judgements were confident and robust.

The Committee acknowledged the positive VSE carried out and was confident that the actions arising following the VSE would lead to continuous improvements.

Decision

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

8. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ST NICHOLAS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the outcome of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at St Nicholas RC Primary School. The focus of the VSE was:

- The quality of leadership and approaches to improvement through self-evaluation;
- The quality of care and education on offer and in particular improvements in numeracy; and
- The extent to which the school was ensuring the best possible outcomes for all its learners.

The VSE validated the school's judgements about its performance in the school and nursery and evidenced that the school had raised attainment continuously and that almost all learners made good or better than good progress from their previous levels of attainment.

The report advised that St Nicholas Primary School demonstrated distributive leadership at all levels with a well-established culture for self-evaluation which involved relevant stakeholders across the school community. The commitment and hard work of all staff and support staff has created a team approach to improvement. Tracking and monitoring in the school and nursery were used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners.

The Head Teacher, Karen Brown, informed the Committee that the VSE carried out confirmed that learners were highly motivated and making good progress in school. There were clear frameworks in place and consistent approaches to learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy. Parents were encouraged to be more involved in their children's learning and were invited into school to look at how the practical methods of teaching were having a positive impact on their children's learning. The Head Teacher then outlined the actions arising from the VSE to ensure continued improvement.

The Head Teacher responded to questions from members of the Committee. She advised that when the new extension in school was complete this would provide more space and have a positive impact on

the health and wellbeing of the children school.

The Committee acknowledged the positive findings of the VSE and were satisfied that the actions arising would lead to continuous improvements.

Decision

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

9. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: EAST CALDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

- Learning and teaching, including pace and challenge; and
- Curriculum.

The report confirmed that the VSE validated the school's judgements about its evaluations in the school, with the exception of improvements in performance and curriculum, both of which were agreed to be good. The evaluations were also agreed for the nursery with the exception of improvements through self-evaluation which the team judged to be good. The Head Teacher and the Depute Head Teacher provided strong leadership within the school and members of staff had a clear understanding of the schools strengths and areas for improvement.

The Head Teacher, Jill Cameron, advised the Committee that a number of key strengths were identified during the VSE process. Children were found to be polite, well behaved and motivated to learn. Children's progress was reviewed through a rigorous tracking and monitoring programme which increased teacher confidence and understanding of progression in children's learning. Parents felt welcome in school and positive feedback was received from parents. Staff would continue to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. The Committee was advised of the actions arising following the VSE process and noted that a more robust assessment strategy was created to ensure a consistent approach across stages and to support staff in building greater confidence in accurately assessing progress within curriculum for excellence levels.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee. She also confirmed that members of staff were looking forward to the new school nursery being built.

The Committee acknowledged the positive VSE report and noted the school's challenges and actions for improvements as set out in the report.

Decision

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

10. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ADDIEWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

- Leadership for improvement;
- Learning, teaching and assessment;
- Meeting learner's needs; and
- Partnership working.

The report confirmed that the VSE team validated the school's judgements about its performance in the school and the nursery in almost all areas. There was clear evidence of continuous improvement and the VSE team recognised that within all areas validated as good there were many features from the next level. The VSE team expected that the school would move quickly to achieve the next level.

The Head Teacher, Laura Gingell, advised the Committee that members of staff were aware of the schools strengths and areas for development and were confident that the school's self-evaluation was leading to improvements. Almost all pupils were motivated and engaged in their learning experiences. Members of staff continued to work in partnership with stakeholders and the wider community to provide opportunities for children. The Head Teacher also outlined the details of the actions arising following the VSE, which included the development of the involvement of parents through home learning programmes enabling parents to share in their children's learning experiences.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee. The Committee acknowledged the positive VSE report and commended staff for the excellent work carried out.

Decision

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

11. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BATHGATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the outcome of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) carried out at St Mary's Primary School, Bathgate. The focus of the VSE was:

GIRFEC

- Changing climate and culture;
- Planning to meet learning needs

NURTURE

- Development of a nurturing school

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

- Differentiation;
- Pace and challenge
- Assessment for learning

The report confirmed that the VSE validated the school's evaluations. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development and the team was confident that the school's arrangements for self-evaluation were leading to improvements. The Head Teacher showed good leadership skills with a clear strategy in place for change.

The Head Teacher, Fiona McKerral, advised the Committee that members of staff found the VSE to be a positive experience. A number of key strengths were highlighted. The children were found to be polite and well behaved and had a good relationship with staff. The nurture class has been a welcome addition to the school and good practice has improved outcomes for the most vulnerable children. The school benefited from effective parental support and from staff working well with partner agencies. Robust tracking and monitoring systems were in place as well as systems to identify and support pupils with additional needs. Class teachers also took part in regular attainment meetings with members of the senior leadership team.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee. She confirmed that a Head Teacher from Edinburgh and Fife took part in the VSE process enabling information to be shared with other authorities which was found to be good practice.

The Committee commended the staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, for the excellent work carried out which has had a positive impact on school improvement.

Decision

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

12. HOW GOOD IS OUR SCHOOL? 4TH EDITION (HGIOS 4)

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing details of the revised Quality Indicators published by Education Scotland.

The fourth edition of How Good is our School? (HGIOS 4) was published in September 2015 and provided a suite of indicators for school self-evaluation, organised within a quality framework used by early years settings, education authorities and children's services. The framework was designed to be used to support self-evaluation and reflection by practitioners at all levels. This set of indicators would be used by Education Scotland in inspections from June 2016 until further notice.

The Depute Chief Executive advised the Committee that the quality improvement team had trialled the use of the HGIOS 4 indicators since January 2016. The new quality indicators would form part of the VSE reports from August 2016 onwards and would underpin review and monitoring of school effectiveness, particularly through validated self-evaluation (VSE), enhancing school improvement and self-evaluation.

The Committee was asked to note the new Education Scotland Quality Indicators and agree that VSE reports would be based on the new indicators from August 2016 onwards.

Decision

Agreed the terms of the report.

13 TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2016-2017

The Committee noted the timetable of meetings for 2016-2017 (copies of which had been circulated).

Decision

Noted the timetable of meetings for 2016-2017.

14. WORKPLAN 2015-2016

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

Decision

Noted the contents of the workplan.