

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 28 MARCH 2017.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Tony Boyle, Alexander Davidson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Carl John, Dave King, Sarah King, Danny Logue, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller and George Paul; Appointed Representatives Myra Macpherson and Margaret Russell.

Apologies – Councillor John McGinty; Appointed Representative Lynne McEwen and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Committee confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 31 January 2017 as being a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: BROXBURN 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 action plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the Education Scotland report published on 31 January 2017.

The Education Officer, Greg Welsh, advised the Committee that a Validated Self Evaluation was carried out in the school in September 2014 which highlighted some significant areas for improvement. The Acting Head Teacher has been in post since June 2016 and has taken the school forward in terms of raising attainment, ethos, culture and improving partnerships with parents and the wider community.

Inspectors noted the following key strengths of the school:

- The hard work of the staff, under the leadership of the Acting Head Teacher, identifying and addressing necessary areas for improvement;
- Children were enthusiastic, happy to share their learning and were keen to take on increasingly more leadership opportunities;
- Improved relationships across the school community which has established a calmer and more purposeful ethos for learning in the nursery and primary classes; and

- Effective partnerships which have been established with parents, other agencies and the wider community.

The Acting Head Teacher, Charlette Robertson, advised that members of staff engaged positively in the inspection process. Inspectors were confident that effective plans were in place for improvement. Staff would continue to develop the curriculum giving greater focus on skills for learning, life and work. The school would continue to develop attainment in literacy and numeracy and improved approaches to self-evaluation and tracking and monitoring children's progress ensured that all children benefitted from engaging, relevant and challenging learning experiences. Effective partnership working with parents and carers and the wider community continued to ensure school improvement.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee confirming that work was ongoing to progress parental engagement and highlighted initiatives that were in place to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning.

Finally, it was noted that the Quality Improvement Team would continue to work with the Head Teacher on the action plan and would monitor and evaluate the school's progress at regular quality improvement visits.

The Committee noted the update from the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) on the plans to appoint the Head Teacher to the school and were assured that the person appointed to the post would be supported and in a position to continue the positive journey of the school.

The Committee acknowledged the excellent progress made under the leadership of the Acting Head Teacher. Feedback received from parents indicated that parents were also pleased with the progress made.

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

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the arrangements for continued improvement;
2. To note the update from the Head Teacher and Education Officer; and
3. To note that the school was making good progress under the strong leadership of the Acting Head Teacher.

4. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: OUR LADY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, STONEYBURN

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 Our Lady's Primary School, Stoneyburn.

The VSE was carried out on 23 January 2017. The focus of the VSE was:

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

The Head Teacher, Joanne McKissack, advised that members of staff found the VSE process to be constructive. The VSE confirmed areas of strengths and areas for improvement to ensure raised attainment for learners. Engagement with all stakeholders was ongoing with children eager to learn and active in the community. Robust tracking and monitoring systems were in place to monitor children's progress. New learning and teaching approaches were being implemented to raise attainment and achievement and staff continued to build on the good practice within school to develop approaches to ensure that all children were being appropriately challenged in their learning. Professional development enabled staff to effectively evaluate the impact on the outcomes for learners.

The Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee confirming that staff continued to engage with education services and cluster groups to ensure ongoing professional dialogue to monitor pupil progress.

The report concluded by advising that the Head Teacher provided very effective leadership. The school was well respected 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 thanked the Head Teacher for the update and acknowledged the positive progress made.

It was recommended that the Committee:

- Notes the findings of the VSE and the actions arising;
- Affirm, or otherwise, the school's capacity for improvement; and
- Note any other actions required.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher; and
2. To note that the Committee was happy with the steps being taken which were leading to improvements being made in school.

5. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: KIRKNEWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

The VSE was carried out from 6-9 February 2017. The focus of the VSE was:

- Leadership of change;
- Learning, teaching and assessment;
- Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion;
- Attainment and achievement (Primary); and
- Securing children's progress (Nursery).

The Head Teacher, Eileen Brown, advised that within the school and nursery relationships between staff, pupils and parents were very positive. The school shared a vision that reflected the values, aims and ambitions of all stakeholders. Children were enthusiastic and motivated in their learning. Members of staff were committed to self-evaluation and taking forward improvement and parents were also invited to be involved in self-evaluation by participating in a number of focus groups to support their children's learning. Effective processes were in place to track, monitor and evaluate learners' progress, which enabled the school to build in appropriate support for all pupils including those facing barriers to their learning. The Head Teacher then highlighted the actions arising following the VSE.

The report concluded by confirming that the school was very well respected within the community and had 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 welcomed the update and commended the staff, under the leadership of the Head Teacher, for the positive progress made within the school and the school's arrangements for continued improvement.

It was recommended that the Committee:

- Note the findings of the VSE and the actions arising;
- Affirm, or otherwise, the school's capacity for improvement; and
- Note any other action required.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the findings of the VSE carried out at Kirknewton Primary School and actions arising following the VSE; and
2. To note that the Committee acknowledged the excellent work carried out in school.

6. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ST ANTHONY'S 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 VSE carried out at St Anthony's Primary School.

The VSE was carried out on 7 February 2017. The focus of the VSE was:

- Self-evaluation for self-improvement;
- Leadership of change; and
- Arrangements for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

The Education Officer, Maureen McNaughton, advised that the school engaged well in the VSE process participating in professional dialogue and meaningful discussion about attainment and the challenges and opportunities ahead for the school.

The Head Teacher, Jim McCrory, stated that staff were happy to engage in the VSE process. The school recognises the importance of embedding its vision and shared values and engaged learners in evaluating the work of the school. The work carried out to extend the school was challenging but was now benefitting the children and wider community and allowing the school to cater to increasing demand as the town begins to grow. Parents felt valued and included in the school community and were provided with useful information about supporting their children's learning.

The report provided details of the actions arising following the VSE which included developing and implementing the use of progressive curricular pathways to support a shared understanding of what progression looks like across all areas of the curriculum, continued development of tracking and monitoring to ensure progress could be measured and the evidence of this used to inform strategic interventions and to further develop learner and partner involvement in evaluating the work of the school including planning and evaluating learning.

Finally, working with the VSE team has enabled the school to have a better 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 Head Teacher then responded to questions from members of the Committee. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, then acknowledged the positive work carried out in school.

It was recommended that the Committee note the findings of the VSE and the actions arising, affirm, or otherwise, the schools capacity for improvements and note any other action required.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the findings of the VSE carried out;
2. To note the update from the Head Teacher and Education Officer; and
3. To note that the Committee acknowledged the positive work carried out in school.

7. HMI INSPECTION PROCESSES AND REPORTING FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing an update on the HMI short inspection model for schools and how the local authority supported schools in this process.

The report explained that Education Scotland introduced a suite of inspection models, which included the following approaches:

- Full inspection model;
- Short inspection model;
- Localised Thematic model; and
- Neighbourhood model.

The report then outlined details relating to each of the four inspection models. The local authority would continue to support schools in line with the new inspection processes.

The council's Quality Improvement Team would continue to keep all school leaders abreast of national developments with evolving inspection models, in preparation of any potential inspections and would continue to engage with schools, reflecting on their evaluations of their provision, and provide a proportionate and responsive level of support to achieve excellence and ensure equity in all of our schools.

In response to a question from the Committee the Head of Education confirmed that Education Scotland would confirm what inspection model would be carried out.

It was recommended that the Committee notes the update of HMI's approaches to inspections and its impact for schools.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. WORKPLAN 2016-2017

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

The Chair advised the Committee that the inspection carried out at St Kentigern's Academy was expected to be reported in time to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 27 June 2017.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.