

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE held within MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 2 NOVEMBER 2021.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Pauline Clark, Bruce Fairbairn, Peter Heggie, Chris Horne, Charles Kennedy, Maria MacAulay, John McGinty, Andrew McGuire, Andrew Miller, Moira Shemilt and Appointed Member Margaret Russell

Apologies - Appointed Members Derek Cornwall, Lynne McEwen and Myra MacPherson

Absent – Councillor George Paul

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 - Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) Report: St Margaret's Academy

Councillor Moira Shemilt declared an interest in that she had a family member at St Margaret's Academy. She would participate in this item of business.

2. MINUTES

The committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 27 April 2021 as a correct record.

3. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION (HMIE) SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Heads of Education informing of the HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) scrutiny programme for academic session 2021-22.

It was recommended that the committee note the contents of the report and the programme of scrutiny outlined by HMIE.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. VALIDATED SELF-EVALUATION: ST ANTHONY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary) bringing to their attention St Anthony's Primary School's validated self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement for session 2021-2022. Johanne Gardner, Head Teacher, was in attendance to provide an update on the school's progress and to answer questions from committee members.

Following Mrs Gardner's presentation, committee highlighted the school's data in achieving the Curriculum for Excellence levels compared to authority and national figures. The Head Teacher detailed the various means in which this was being addressed which included a collaborative and consistent staff approach. Specifically addressing numeracy levels in primary 1, Mrs Gardner advised interventions had been put in place for a number of pupils which led to a percentage increase from 77% in June to 82% in October. Officers expanded on the data detailed for 2020/21 advising that the authority were looking closely at this as a whole in relation to the interrupted periods of learning throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A publication was expected through the National Improvement Framework detailing the national impact which could provide wider context.

Further discussion followed and included a query regarding the schools own evaluation of performance indicators 2.3 and 3.1 as satisfactory in comparison to the VSE's outcome of good. It was explained that in order to assess the outcome sound evidence was required and the VSE team had supported the school in understanding they had suitable evidence to achieve the better rating.

It was recommended that the committee note 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.

5. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION (VSE) REPORT: ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY

Councillor Andrew McGuire left the meeting as this item was being concluded and did not participate in the remaining items of business.

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Secondary Education bringing to their attention the outcomes of the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) of St Margaret's Academy's approach to recovery and continuing improvement. Siobhan McGarty, Head Teacher, was in attendance to provide an update on the school's progress and to answer questions from committee members.

Committee noted the Head Teacher's update and discussion led to an enquiry on how engagement with families was achieved considering the large catchment area. Mrs McGarty confirmed this was addressed through digital means, such as online parents evenings and also through the use of the school newsletter which provided the opportunity to make parents aware of what happens in the classrooms and the school in general.

It was acknowledged that the school performed consistently well with school leavers progressing to an initial positive destinations. Mrs McGarty

explained this was achieved through the schools close links with various partners, 1-1 engagement with pupils who were applying for university and by “going the extra mile” to ensure pupils were leaving school with a suitable destination. Career discussions started with pupils early in their time at the school with work experience and presentations from employers assisting those who may not yet have a clear career plan.

It was recommended that the committee note the contents of the report and the school’s arrangements for recovery and continuing improvement.

Decision

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

6. VALIDATED SELF-EVALUATION: CALDERWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Primary) bringing to their attention Calderwood Primary School’s validated self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement for session 2021-2022. Sarah Burton, Head Teacher, was in attendance to provide an update on the school’s progress and to answer questions from committee members.

Miss Burton’s update explained that although primary pupils had not started in the school until September 2021 her Head Teacher post had commenced in May. This provided the opportunity to build relationships with families, through the use of media channels, in order to build confidence in the school prior to the pupils attending. Miss Burton also explained the transition process, which was personalised through contact with existing establishments in order to assist any pupils who may have required personalised supports.

The committee highlighted similarities between Calderwood and the new community developments in Winchburgh, querying how the community could be actively built. Miss Burton explained the school’s continual engagement with families towards the development of the school and the support the school received from families in return. Due to the close proximity of Calderwood Country Park, the school could make use of their surroundings for outdoor learning with the community appreciating seeing pupils using the area to support their learning.

It was recommended that the committee note 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.

7. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Officers advised that the workplan would be updated to detail a change from the noted VSE for St John the Baptist Primary School which would be replaced with St Paul's Primary School, East Calder. The workplan would also be updated for the full academic session following review of the HMIE scrutiny programme and Scottish Government guidance.

Decision

1. To note the workplan;
2. To note the VSE detailed for St John the Baptist Primary School would be replaced with St Paul's Primary School, East Calder; and
3. To note officers would continue to review Scottish Government guidance and the re-engagement of the HMIE scrutiny programme and update the workplan for the full academic session.