

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 15 JANUARY 2019.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Pauline Clark, Peter Heggie, Chris Horne, Carl John, Charles Kennedy, Dave King, Andrew McGuire, Cathy Muldoon (substituting for Councillor George Paul), Moira Shemilt and Damian Timson; Appointed Members Myra Macpherson and Lynne McEwen

Apologies – Councillors Andrew Miller and George Paul; Appointed Members Eric Lumsden and Margaret Russell

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 8: Education Scotland Report: Armadale Primary School and Nursery Class

Appointed Member Lynne McEwen declared an interest as her grandchildren were pupils of Armadale Academy.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 6 November 2018 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: ST JOHN OGILVIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND WOODLANDS NURSERY SCHOOLS

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) of St John Ogilvie Primary School and Woodlands Nursery Schools.

The report outlined a number of key strengths and areas for ongoing improvement. Details of performance information for the school were provided in the report relating to attendance for session 2017/18 and teacher professional judgements for pupils achieving expected national levels in 2017/18 at Primary 1, 4 and 7.

The Head Teacher, Joanne McKissack, then responded to a number of questions from members of the committee. With regard to self-evaluation, the school was aware that due to recent staffing changes previous good practice would need to be re-embedded. In response to a question about the Pupil Equity Fund, the Head Teacher confirmed that it had been used for a number of initiatives, including poverty-proofing the school, staff training and pupil support work.

The school was commended on the substantial improvement of

performance at Primary 7 since the previous school year, which, as the Head Teacher explained, was due to the high emphasis the school placed on teacher training as well as better understanding of achievement levels across the authority.

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.

#### 4. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION UPDATE: LETHAM NURSERY CLASS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing an update of the progress made in Letham Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting through their action plan.

The report was a follow-up from the VSE the school had undergone in October 2018 and focused on reviewing and assessing the impact of the action plan to secure improvement in the quality of children's learning experiences. It listed a number of positive findings and showed improvement on most quality indicators for ELC class.

The report showed that the ELC action plan had resulted in a number of well-paced improvements. The Head Teacher, Sharon Wallace, had supported the Early Years Officer to lead improvement across the setting and motivate the ELC practitioner team. The Quality Improvement Team, Head Teacher and Early Years Development Officers would continue to support and challenge improvement in Letham ELC setting.

The Head Teacher advised that some of the GIRFEC levels shown in the report had changed as follows: Level 1 was currently at 82.6%, Level 2 at 13.1% and Level 3 at 4.4%. It was noted that the figures were comparable to similar schools across the authority. With regard to improving the 'securing children's progress' 'satisfactory' level indicator, the school was following through an action plan implemented in September 2018 and working closely with the Continuing Professional Learning central team.

The Head Teacher clarified that use of the outdoor learning environment had increased due to the school providing more opportunities such as daily outdoor access and appropriate clothing for pupils. She then elaborated on family involvement within the school, owed to the emphasis the school placed on trust and good relationship building.

The committee acknowledged improvement of most quality indicators and commended the school on its presentation and staff enthusiasm.

It was recommended that the committee note the contents of the report and the arrangement for securing continuous improvements.

#### Decision

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

5. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: PARKHEAD 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) of Parkhead Primary School and Nursery Class.

The report outlined a number of key strengths and areas for ongoing improvement. Details of performance information for the school were provided in the report relating to attendance for session 2017/18 and teacher professional judgements for pupils achieving expected national levels in 2017/18 at Primary 1, 4 and 7.

The Head Teacher, Vicky Fish, presented the report and responded to questions from committee members. She advised that the school had a robust system for tracking, monitoring and intervening on additional support needs. Staff understanding of the analysis of assessment and attainment information was achieved through training from the local authority and professional dialogue.

During discussion, members were advised that the school was working to address barriers to reading and writing attainment and to raise pupils' confidence, that parental support and involvement was a key focus of the school and that creativity was promoted through opportunity and encouragement. The Head Teacher also talked about how the school's new INSPIRE values had come about. Finally, it was noted that the school was regularly assessing the school building to ensure it was fit for purpose and was considering plans for expansion of the nursery space.

The committee noted that it was pleased with the school's progress.

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.

6. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: ARMADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

Councillor Shemilt left the meeting during this item 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 Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) providing details of the improvement plan which addressed the areas for improvement at Armadale Primary School and Nursery Class identified in the Education Scotland report published on 27

November 2018. Education Scotland's letter and the School's Improvement Plan were attached as appendices to the report.

Inspectors had noted key strengths of the school, namely a supportive and nurturing ethos and positive relationships between children and children and staff; well-developed indoor and outdoor learning environments; effective collaboration between senior leaders, staff and partners to analyse information and meet learning needs; and a positive culture towards reading. In addition, Education Scotland had stated that overall attainment in Literacy and Numeracy was good, while data were used efficiently to track children's progress and target interventions. The school's Pupil Equity Fund was used effectively.

The following areas for improvement had been identified by Education Scotland: Effective practice should be shared more regularly to ensure that all children benefited from high-quality learning and teaching and that all teachers had consistently high expectations of children's work; and approaches to tracking children's achievements, including out-of-class activities, should be further improved.

The Seconded Head Teacher, Julie Ross, then responded to questions from members of the committee. She advised that different channels were used to cover a range of needs in class and that staff were adaptable to different class sizes. Good practice was shared at school, cluster and authority level. It was noted that fullest consideration was being given to the high number of acting posts within the school to ensure stable leadership and that such acting posts provided opportunities for new teachers.

The report confirmed that Inspectors were confident that the school had the capacity to continue to improve; therefore, no more visits were required in connection with the inspection. The school was well supported by West Lothian Council.

The committee members acknowledged the excellent work carried out in the school and expressed their confidence that improvements would continue to be made.

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 Seconded Head Teacher.

## 7. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL SUBJECTS

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 actions taken to improve performance in Social Subjects across West Lothian Secondary Schools.

The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) introduced the report, noting the impact curriculum could have on the senior phase of higher education (S4–S6). The Chair of DHT Curriculum group, Siobhan McGarty and two representatives from the Principal Teachers of Curriculum (Social Subjects), Stephen MacKenzie (Inveralmond Community High School) and Claire Gill (St Kentigern's Academy), then presented the report and responded to questions.

Evidence from the broad General Education Curriculum VSE currently under way in West Lothian's Secondary schools and additional analysis of Senior phase attainment data in Social Subjects had led the council to develop a strategic approach to improving outcomes across all areas of the Social Subjects curriculum. As part of this strategic approach, a programme had been developed in consultation with the Depute Head Teacher (DHT) Curriculum group and the Principal Teachers of Curriculum (Social Subjects) to enhance capacity of Principal Teachers and classroom practitioners in order to raise attainment in Geography, Modern Studies and History across all secondary schools.

The committee members thanked the DHT Curriculum group and the Principal Teachers of Curriculum (Social Subjects) team and indicated that they looked forward to further good results.

It was recommended that the committee note:

- The contents of the report; and
- The arrangements for improvement actions across social subjects.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update by the Chair of DHT Curriculum group and Principal Teachers of Curriculum (Social Subjects) representatives.

## 8. WORKPLAN

The committee noted the following amendments to the workplan for the meeting of 5 March:

1. VSE Bathgate Academy would be removed from the workplan as the school was undergoing an HMI inspection, which would be reported at a future Education (Quality Assurance) Committee meeting.
2. VSE East Calder Primary School would be moved to a future Education (Quality Assurance) Committee meeting.
3. VSE Boghall Primary School would be added to the workplan.
4. West Calder High School Engagement Visit report would be added to the workplan.

Decision

To note the workplan subject to the amendments indicated above.