

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 30 APRIL 2019.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Pauline Clark, Peter Heggie, Chris Horne, Carl John, Charles Kennedy, Dave King, Andrew McGuire, Andrew Miller, George Paul, Moira Shemilt and Damian Timson; Appointed Members Eric Lumsden, Myra MacPherson and Lynne McEwen

Apologies – Appointed Member Margaret Russell

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 5 March 2019 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: BATHGATE ACADEMY

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) advising of the outcome of the Education Scotland (HMI) inspection at Bathgate Academy. The Education Scotland letter outlining the results of the inspection was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The team of Education Scotland inspectors had visited Bathgate Academy in January 2019; they had spoken to parents/carers and pupils and had worked closely with the Head Teacher and the school's staff.

The inspectors had identified the following strengths: effective leadership of the Head Teacher; highly motivated staff; and a supportive and nurturing environment.

The following areas for improvement were identified: procedures for leading school improvement and well-focused priorities for greater consistency in the experiences of young people; increase in learning pace and ensuring that learning was appropriate to the needs of each learner; and raising attainment across all stages through the use of available data.

Inspectors were confident that the school had the capacity to continue to improve, and they would make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school was well supported by West Lothian Council.

During discussion, Grant Abbot, Head Teacher, responded to members' questions regarding the school's performance, especially in numeracy and mathematics, and explained about the school's efforts to raise

performance figures through collaboration and facilitating transitions. The school aimed to respond to pupils' varying needs and to encourage highest attainment in the area most suited to each child. Consistent teaching approaches were promoted and pupils were given opportunities to reflect on and contribute to their classroom experience. Plans were also in place to address the recent reduction in Initial Positive Destinations. Any discipline issues were also being dealt with.

The committee then discussed HMI's summarised inspection findings. The Head Teacher commented that the school recognised its strengths and acknowledged the areas where improvement was required. The Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance) indicated that Education Services had been working closely with the school with positive results.

The school was commended on its performance at the Polar Academy expedition. The committee acknowledged the efforts made by the school and commended the motivation of staff and pupils. Members wished to see the school return to this committee to discuss progress in the areas targeted for improvement.

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 update from the Head Teacher.
2. To agree that Bathgate Academy would be invited to provide a progress update to the committee in 12 months.

4. VALIDATED SELF EVALUATION: LIVINGSTON VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

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 Livingston Village Primary School and Early Learning Centre.

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.

During discussion, the Head Teacher, Jackie Mill, explained how the school aimed to reduce teacher involvement in order to encourage pupils to take ownership of their learning. The Head Teacher then elaborated on the formal and informal channels the school used to promote mental wellbeing and resilience and talked about the school's outdoor learning and inclusive sports participation approaches. Initiatives where the school

used its PEF were then discussed. The Head Teacher strived to be available and approachable to parents in order to encourage parental engagement. Reasons for the school's GIRFEC percentages at levels 3 and 4 were then discussed and the Head Teacher assured members that appropriate support was provided in each case. Finally, the school acknowledged that an area for ongoing improvement was better engagement of practitioners in data analysis.

The school was commended on its achievements, including its approach to sports.

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: ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND POLBETH EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Councillors Peter Heggie and Andrew Miller 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 outcomes of the Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) of St Mary's Primary School and Polbeth Early Learning Centre.

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.

Siobhan Kellock, Head Teacher, then responded to questions from the committee and elaborated on the school's increased expectations from pupils. The school promoted play-based pedagogy and outdoor education. Ways of poverty proofing the school were then discussed, and the Head Teacher indicated that the school was part of a cluster improvement plan. In response to questions regarding ASD classes, the Head Teacher indicated that children were accepting of ASD pupils and contributed to their integration; awareness events were also held in the school to promote inclusive education.

The committee commended the school on the excellent results reported.

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. UPDATE REPORT: POLKEMMET PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Councillor Damian Timson 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 an update of the progress made by Polkemmet Primary School and Early Learning Centre since its VSE in February 2018.

Areas of action which had been identified through the VSE had been addressed as part of the school's improvement planning process. The school had made good progress in all areas of action.

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.

During discussion, the Head Teacher, Linda Baxter, indicated that improvement of GIRFEC figures since the VSE was due to factors including effective interventions and appropriate teacher training. Specific factors that may have contributed to the school's SIMD ranking were then discussed, as well as how they could be addressed. The Head Teacher then talked about how the school had reached its values, namely through consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Finally, the importance of learning through outdoor play was underlined.

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.

Decision

To note the workplan.