

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within OGILVIE HOUSE, OGILVIE WAY, KNIGHTSRIDGE, LIVINGSTON, EH54 8HL, on THURSDAY 4 JUNE 2009.

Present – Councillors Andrew Miller (Chair), Frank Anderson (substituting for Greg McCarra), Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Ellen Glass and John McGinty; Mrs Myra MacPherson.

Apologies – Councillors Greg McCarra and Jim Walker; Rev. Dr. Robert Anderson.

1. PRIVATE SESSION

The Panel resolved that the public be excluded for the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of information which would be exempt under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 if it were before a meeting of the Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees.

2. HMIE REPORT – ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PRIMARY SCHOOL AND FAULHOUSE NURSERY CLASS

In November 2008, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited St. John the Baptist Primary School and Fauldhouse Nursery Class as part of a national sample of primary education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The following key strengths were highlighted:-

- The welcoming ethos and the high level of care which staff show for children
- The teamwork of all staff and their commitment to improving children's learning
- The very good range of after-school activities which enriched primary children's experience.
- Very well behaved children who were motivated and enthusiastic about learning

HMI had identified the following example of good practice which had been added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- The P7 Forest School

The following areas of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- Increase the pace and challenge in children's learning to meet their

needs more effectively

- Develop more rigorous approaches for monitoring, evaluation and improving the quality of attainment, learning and teaching

HMI were confident that the school would be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, they would make no further visits to the school following the inspection. The school and education authority had prepared an action plan (which had been circulated) indicating how the main findings of the report would be addressed, which would be shared with parents. The school and education authority would inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the improvement plan. The Chair of the Parent Council spoke of their disappointment with the findings of the report, particularly having regard to the schools attainment levels.

In response to concerns raised by members of the panel and the parent council regarding contradictions within the HMI report, the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) undertook to raise the concerns with the District HMIE Inspector for West Lothian.

#### Decisions -

- (a) To note the contents of the report.
- (b) To note the school's action plan.

### 3. HMIE REPORT – WILLIAMSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

In March 2009, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Williamston Primary School as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The following key strengths were highlighted:-

- Motivated, confident and polite children in the nursery and primary classes
- Features of learning in the nursery and through the primary stages, which provided a good foundation for a Curriculum for Excellence
- Extensive opportunities for children's wider achievement, and the encouragement and celebration of those achievements
- Children's attainment in English language and mathematics
- Staff teamwork and willingness to take leading roles, innovate and contribute to improvements in learning

- The strong culture of reflection and commitment to continuous improvement
- Outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, ably supported by the depute Headteacher and principal teachers.

HMI had identified the following examples of good practice which would be added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- Development of key aspects of Curriculum for Excellence through children's wider achievements and performances
- Primary 7 "Hats of the World" project
- Children's involvement in decision-making in the school

The following area for improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- The school should continue to introduce improvements in learners' experiences as it built on its strong start to Curriculum for Excellence

As a result of the strong levels of achievement, the strong record of improvement and the highly effective leadership of the school, HM Inspectors would make no further visits or reports in connection with the inspection. The education authority would let parents know about the school's progress as part of its normal arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the improvement plan. The Chair of the Parent Council confirmed it was delighted with the findings of the report.

#### Decisions

- (a) To note the contents of the report.
- (b) To note the school's improvement plan.
- (c) To commend the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the very positive report.

#### 4. HMIE REPORT – DECHMONT INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

In February 2009, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Dechmont Infant School and Nursery Class as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The following key

strengths were highlighted:-

- The very inclusive ethos with well behaved and polite children who were eager to learn
- Strong links with parents and the local community
- Children's enjoyment in learning French and the progress they have made
- The contribution of support staff in enhancing children's learning through their involvement in the wider work of the school

HMI had identified the following example of good practice which would be added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- Children learning to communicate using sign language from nursery to P3

HMI were confident that the school would be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result they would make no further visits to the school following the inspection. The school and the education authority had prepared an improvement plan (which had been circulated) indicating how the main findings of the report would be addressed, which would be shared with parents. The school and education authority would inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the improvement plan.

#### Decisions -

- (a) To note the contents of the report.
- (b) To note the school's improvement plan.
- (c) To commend the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the positive report.

#### 5. HMIE REPORT – DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

In January 2009, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Deans Community High School as part of a national sample of secondary education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The following key strengths were highlighted:-

- Courteous, polite and very friendly young people
- Young people and staff who are very committed to improving their school

- The acting headteacher's impact in setting a clear agenda for the school's improvement

HMI had identified the following examples of good practice which would be added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- Steps to help young people keep safe and healthy through the work of Operation Floorwalk
- The school's strategy for developing literacy skills
- The opportunities for young people to learn and achieve through their involvement in the Woodlands Trust Project

The following areas for improvement had been agreed with the school and the education authority:-

The school should continue to:

- Take action to improve the attainment of young people at all stages
- Improve the quality of learners' experiences and raise expectations of what they can achieve
- Extend the consistent use of self-evaluation across the school

HMI would remain in contact with the school and the education authority during the year following the publication of the report. The school and education authority had prepared an improvement plan (which had been circulated) indicating how the main findings of the report would be addressed, which would be shared with parents. One year after the date of the HMI report, the school and the education authority would inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

During the discussion, the Head Teacher provided an overview of the action plan. The Chair of the Parent Council advised of their satisfaction with the findings of the report.

### Decisions

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To note the school's improvement plan.

## 6. HMIE REPORT – OGILVIE SCHOOL CAMPUS

In March 2009, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Ogilvie School Campus as part of a national sample of Additional Support Needs

provision. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The following key strengths were highlighted:-

- Children's high quality learning experiences and their ability to work together successfully
- Effective teamwork and communication within a purposeful learning environment
- Innovative approaches to delivering the curriculum to meet children's needs
- The support to children in partner schools by the primary behaviour support service
- The very strong leadership of the acting headteacher

HMI had identified the following examples of good practice which would be added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- Opportunity for active learning
- Assessment procedures within the primary behaviour support service
- Working in partnership to support integration

The following are for improvement had been agreed with the school and the education authority:-

- Continue to develop practice in line with the national initiative, Curriculum for Excellence

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, HMI would make no further visits following the inspection. The education authority would inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the action plan.

#### Decisions

- (a) To note the contents of the report.
- (b) To note the school's improvement plan.
- (c) To commend the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the positive report.

7. HMIE REPORT – HOWDEN ST. ANDREW’S PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

In February 2009, HM Inspectors of Schools visited Howden St. Andrew’s RC Primary School and Nursery Class as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The following key strengths were highlighted:-

- Children’s attitudes and enthusiasm towards their learning and wider achievements
- Development of the nursery and outdoor education environment
- Well considered approaches which staff use to meet children’s learning needs
- The work undertaken by staff in promoting the Curriculum for Excellence and self evaluation which has improved the work of the school
- Strong leadership, good teamwork and the positive moral among staff

Inspectors had noted best practice in the use of Information Technology across the curriculum which would be added to the HMI website to be shared nationally. The school also worked very well in partnership with parents and the parish community to ensure that the children received a rich Christian experience.

The following areas for improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- Continue to improve the school’s tracking of children’s progress ensuring appropriate pace and challenge for all
- Further develop opportunities for children to be active in their learning throughout the school

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, HM Inspectors would make no further visits following the inspection. The education authority would inform parents about the school’s progress as part of the authority’s arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the improvement plan.

Decisions

- (a) To note the contents of the report.

- (b) To note the school's improvement plan.
- (c) To commend the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the positive report.

#### 8. HMIE REPORT – ST. NICHOLAS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

In December 2008, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited St. Nicholas RC Primary School and Nursery Class as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The following key strengths had been identified:-

- Children who were motivated and keen to learn
- Increasing opportunities for children to work collaboratively and achieve widely
- High levels of care and concern shown by all staff
- Positive relationships with parents

HMI had identified the following example of good practice which would be added to their website to be shared nationally:-

- Active learning through music at the early stages

The following areas for improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority:-

- In the nursery class, identify next steps in children's learning to ensure they all made appropriate progress
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles set out in Curriculum for Excellence
- In the primary classes, ensure activities were challenging, particularly for the higher achieving children
- Further develop self-evaluation approaches to improve the quality of learning, teaching and achievement

HMI were confident that the school would be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, they would make no further visits to the school following the inspection. The school and the education authority had prepared an improvement plan (which had been circulated) indicating how the main findings of the report would be addressed, which would be shared with parents. The school and education authority would inform parents about their school's progress in improving the quality of education.



During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the improvement plan. The Chair of the Parent Council advised that it was pleased with the findings of the HMle report.

Decision

- (a) To note the contents of the report.
- (b) To note the school's improvement plan.
- (c) To commend the Headteacher, staff and pupils on the positive report.