

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 12 March 2013

BY: Executive Director (Services for People)

SUBJECT: Follow-Through visit of Loretto RC Primary School and Nursery Class by Education Scotland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of Follow-through visit of Loretto RC Primary School and Nursery Class by Education Scotland.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland report (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Note the good progress made by the school since the original inspection
 - (iii) Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on the contents of the report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Loretto RC Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected in March 2011 and a report on the work of the school was published in October 2011. As consequence of the original inspection, Education Scotland stated that it would carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and would report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. This visit took place in September 2012 and this report was published in October 2012.

3.2 The report noted progress in the following areas:

- The school has made good progress in re-establishing teamwork.
- Staff are now more confident about what they can do to lead learning and improvement in the school.
- Parents and children are now more involved and understand more about how they can be meaningful partners in the life of the school.
- The school is now better placed to identify, agree and take forward important priorities.

3.3 The inspection team also noted that:

- There is further work to do to improve key areas, such as, curriculum development and tracking progress.
- In the coming year, the school would benefit from continued support from its authority and Education Scotland where appropriate.

3.3.1 This will involve weekly visits from the school's Quality Improvement Officer to discuss with the Head Teacher resources needed to sustain further improvement as well as to provide advice on other areas such as staffing, learning and teaching etc.

3.3.2 As the school's capacity to improve grows these visits will become less frequent. HMI from Education Scotland and the Quality Improvement Officer will lead a number of whole school development sessions and provide feedback on the key areas identified for further development through planned visits to classrooms and talking to staff. This feedback will, in turn, lead to further improvement. Other officers will provide support as required. For example the Curriculum for Excellence Quality Improvement Officer is currently working with the school to introduce an electronic tracking system.

3.4 Education Scotland will make a further inspection visit within a year of the publication of the report. It will then inform parents about the extent of progress in making improvements.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Education Scotland report (Appendix 1).

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DATE	January 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Loretto RC Primary School and Nursery Class East
Lothian Council**

In October 2011, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in October 2011 and at aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children in the nursery class continue to be happy and enthusiastic learners. Staff have developed further opportunities for parents to engage with and share in children's learning, for example, by contributing to children's learning stories. In most primary classes, children continue to behave well. In all classes, teachers now discuss and share with children what they are going to learn and how they will know they are learning successfully. The clarity of these discussions is not yet consistent enough across the school. As a result, most children do not know their strengths as learners and what they need to do to get better.

In some classes, children's skills as independent learners are now developing, notably through their writing experiences. Across the school, children are now beginning to be given more opportunities and responsibility to take forward their own learning but this needs to be developed further.

Staff in the school and notably in the nursery class, have made progress to provide evidence of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This work is still at an early stage in the primary classes. In the nursery class, there are more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills in different areas of the playroom. There are regular, well-focused learning activities on offer in the nursery. Children in nursery now use new equipment and resources to develop their learning. In the primary classes, during group activities, almost all children listen carefully and show respect for one another and the adults in the room. Staff have begun to plan and provide more interesting and relevant reading activities in most classes. Where this is working well, children enjoy richer learning activities and express enjoyment in their learning. Teachers are beginning to use more challenging approaches to developing literacy skills. There is now an agreed approach to teaching writing skills and more consistency in children's experiences of writing. Staff need to increase the opportunities children have to write more regularly.

Mathematics and numeracy skills are more thoughtfully planned in most classes to make learning more active and in some cases more relevant to real life. In the best cases, children could identify how learning from other curriculum areas was linking up with their learning in numeracy. There is still room to improve attainment and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at this time. The school has identified an agreed whole-school approach to tracking progress as a priority and is assessing possible ways to take this forward.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Across the nursery and most primary classes, staff are becoming more confident about working with Curriculum for Excellence. This confidence is not yet consistent across the whole school. Staff now take better account of children's learning needs through well-targeted activities in literacy and numeracy. Staff now work together in learning teams to develop the curriculum. This is at an early stage but will increase further the pace and the progress made in supporting children's learning. Staff are now better placed to make learning appropriately challenging for every learner. Staff should improve arrangements for setting targets for children whose learning requires individualised planning. Support staff should be more involved in this. Staff in nursery and in P1 now have a shared understanding of what children can do and what they will be doing next. As a result, transition between nursery and primary is more focused on children's learning. Senior staff have improved their partnership work with St David's High School and other primary schools in the Musselburgh area. This requires further development.

The school does not yet meet the Scottish Government's expectation that all children will have access to two hours of high-quality physical education every week.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The school has worked with parents and children to review and refresh its vision, values and aims. It is now working on making them more accessible by using plainer language. The headteacher has made a well-planned return to work and been sensitive and supportive to the efforts and achievements of staff in her absence. She is now resuming responsibility for leading the school.

Overall, staff morale has improved and staff recognise the importance of this to sustained and on-going improvement. They are more confident in engaging professionally to lead learning and improvement. They are making more effective use of self-evaluation tools. There is greater teamwork across the school community. Children, particularly those at the upper stages, have more opportunities to take responsibility around the school and to work alongside adults to bring about improvements. The Parent Council has continued to provide strong support for the school. They have undertaken initial training in self-evaluation so that they can better support the work of the school. This work should now continue.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress in re-establishing teamwork. Staff are now more confident about what they can do to lead learning and improvement in the school. Parents and children are now more involved and understand more about how they can be meaningful partners in the life of the school. The school is now better placed to identify, agree and take forward important priorities. There is further work to do to improve key areas, such as, curriculum development and tracking progress. In the coming year, the school would benefit from continued support from its authority and Education Scotland where appropriate. We will make a further inspection visit within a year of the publication of this letter. We will then inform parents about the extent of progress in making improvements.

Alasdair Eadie HM
Inspector

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.