

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 20 September 2016

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Shared Inspection of Cockenzie Primary School by
Education Scotland and East Lothian Council

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the shared inspection of Cockenzie Primary School by Education Scotland and East Lothian Council. Education Scotland indicated in its previous report of 15 December 2015 that there would be an extended visit to the school with the Local Authority before the end of the school session. This took place on 7 and 8 June 2016. This is a model of inspection that Education Scotland has been trialling in a number of Local Authorities.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland letter to parents (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on the very good progress that has been made by the school since the previous visit by Education Scotland in October 2015.
 - (iii) Congratulate the Head Teacher on the clear vision for the school and note her leadership of change is strong.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Education Scotland has now published four reports on Cockenzie Primary School: in April 2014, March 2015, October 2015, and now most recently in June 2016. Improvements have been seen on every visit.
- 3.2 The letter to parents dated 23 August 2016 noted a number of areas of improvement, including:
- Most children at nursery and primary stages are actively engaged and motivated by high quality learning experiences.

- Almost all children at the primary stages are developing literacy skills very effectively.
- The increased expectations and improved planning for learning has led to good progress in numeracy.
- Staff know how well children are progressing through their use of a wide range of assessment information. They are tracking the progress of all children very well and know what to expect children to achieve.
- Staff have identified features of the school's community and locality as a foundation to learning about a variety of relevant contexts and learning outdoors. This has led to children understanding more about their heritage and has developed a sense of identity and pride in their school.
- The Head Teacher has a clear vision for the school and her leadership of change is strong. Her emphasis on developing people and the leadership of staff has successfully improved learning and teaching, increased professional dialogue and fostered effective partnerships with parents.

3.3 As a result of the strong leadership of the Head Teacher and the very good progress made by the school, Education Scotland will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Education Scotland letter to parents on Cockenzie Primary School dated August 2016 (Appendix 1).

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DATE	29 August 2016

23 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Cockenzie Primary School and Nursery Class East Lothian Council

In April 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in December 2015. 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, parents and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other 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?

At the primary stages and in the nursery class, most children are actively engaged and motivated by high quality learning experiences. Children in the nursery class play cooperatively together and explore and investigate the outdoors with confidence and curiosity. They are developing physical skills and speaking about their learning through opportunities to share ideas developed through the well-planned playroom and outdoor learning environments. Children are becoming increasingly aware of how to keep safe and can express their needs through the use of a helpful spider mascot. They know to report to the well-located child friendly first aid station if they need to get some help. At the primary stages, almost all children are actively involved in their learning and enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They are becoming confident in talking about and evaluating their learning together. They are aware of how well they are progressing and know what they need to do to improve. Children have the opportunity to think about and share their learning with parents through the successful family homework activities and the evaluation of learning logs. Almost all children have developed skills in cooperating together when learning in small groups. This is developing literacy skills very effectively and children can apply their reading and writing skills in a range of stimulating learning activities. Learning continues to be well supported through the effective use of digital technologies. This is helping children to take responsibilities and become leaders of their own learning.

At the primary stages and in the nursery class, we are pleased that during this school session most children are making good progress overall. Children are challenged in their learning and staff expect them to achieve well. The increased expectations and improved planning for learning has led to good progress in numeracy and some very good progress in literacy. Children's learning is well supported at points when they move from stage to stage. This has been strengthened when children are moving from the nursery class to primary one. Staff know how well children are progressing through their use of a wide range of assessment information. They are skilled in their use of questioning to check for children's understanding. They are tracking the progress of all children very well and know what to expect children to achieve. Overall, we are pleased with how well children are learning and their progress across the curriculum. Children are increasingly taking responsibilities for their learning and the work of the school. Their contribution to responsibility groups is developing well and includes them in all aspects of the school's ongoing improvements.

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

Staff have developed a clear understanding of what they want children to achieve through Curriculum for Excellence. They have identified the features of the school's community and locality as a foundation to learning about a variety of relevant contexts and learning outdoors. This has led to children understanding more about their heritage and developed a sense of identity and pride in their school. They are developing an understanding of history and change through learning about Cockenzie Power Station and the impact it has had on the town and its people. They are also understanding more about the legacy of John Muir and his influence on their lives today. The ongoing development of how children build on their skills over time is leading to better progress overall. This has been particularly successful in literacy and numeracy and at the early level of the curriculum. The staff should continue to develop the curriculum programmes for all areas of learning, as planned. The school has improved its approaches to ensure all children learn as best they can. Staff know children and their families very well and work together very effectively to ensure appropriate support is provided when necessary. The improved focus on tracking attainment and approaches to identify and support children with additional support needs helps inform learning groups and the next steps in learning.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and her leadership of change is strong. She has improved teamwork amongst staff, raised the standards of achievements and transformed the school's approaches to self-evaluation. Her emphasis on developing people and the leadership of staff has successfully improved learning and teaching, increased professional dialogue and fostered effective partnerships with parents. The recent appointment of two principal teachers has already had a positive influence on the school's improved approaches to teaching. All staff are committed to their continuing professional development and ensuring this has a positive impact to benefit children. The school now has a culture of high expectations founded on self-improvement and collaboration. Everyone we spoke to during our visit is supportive of the school and rightly proud of the school's achievements. The family homework is a very good example of how parents are

much more involved in children's learning. The success of P1 in a National French speaking competition is just one of the many wide-ranging ways in which children have their achievements recognised. Overall, the pace of change is well-judged and the positive impact of developments is evident throughout the nursery and primary classes. The effectiveness of the senior leadership team is evidenced through the improved curriculum and effective teaching. They are an effective team and the headteacher ensures positive results by drawing on individual strengths. With continued support from East Lothian Council and the increased involvement of yourselves as parents and carers, the capacity of Cockenzie Primary School and Nursery Classes is high.

What happens next?

As a result of the very good progress made by the school as outlined in this letter, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, East Lothian Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Susan Gow
HM Inspector

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