



**West Lothian  
Council**  
Education Services

**St. Paul's Primary School  
HMIE Progress Report  
November 2016**

## **Contents**

### **1. The inspection**

HMIE published a report on the inspection of St. Paul's Primary School in November 2014. The school in collaboration with the Education Authority outlined priorities for improvement in its School Improvement Plan which included recommendations from the report.

### **2. Continuous Improvement**

Since the inspection the school has continued to improve and we have further developed our curriculum to include frameworks in Science, social studies, and outdoor learning. We have developed strategies to track and monitor learner's progress in these curricular areas using a range of assessments. In our nursery class good progress has been made to ensure whole school improvements impact positively on learner's experiences and nursery practice.

### **3. Progress Towards the Agreed Areas for Improvement**

#### **Area for Development 1:**

- **To ensure whole school improvements impact on nursery practice.**

In the nursery class we are exploring and embedding a more flexible approach to the curriculum based on the implementation of "Building the Ambition". We have developed our planning to respond more effectively to the needs of our children through "play led" learning. Our observations and regular professional dialogue have become more focused on the interests of the children which allows us to plan more meaningful experiences for individuals and groups.

As part of our whole school outdoor learning focus the nursery team have developed outdoor learning boxes which allow children personalisation and choice in their play and have provided opportunities for our nursery children to begin to think creatively, critically and to develop problem solving skills. We are striving to develop our open ended resources including "loose parts" to create opportunities for enquiry based learning across the early level. This includes working with our Primary 1 pupils as part of our transition programme.

In the nursery we are looking at creative ways to engage parents, through home link sheets, questionnaires, coffee mornings, "Stay and Play" sessions and curricular workshops. This session staff have implemented online Learners Journeys which was supported by a very informative presentation to parents by the nursery teacher. These have been very well received by parents with an excellent level of parental engagement with their child's Learner's Journey.

Our nursery team have developed very positive links with other WLC nurseries through the early year's forum and nursery network meetings. Our early year's team have actively engaged in professional learning. Our early year's practitioner has completed her Froebel Qualification and was invited to share her project on "Mother Song" at the WLC Early Years showcase. Our nursery teachers are completing master's level courses at Stirling and Edinburgh Universities which has impacted very positively on the practice in the nursery.

## Area for Development 2:

- **Continue with existing plans to develop the curriculum building on existing approaches to assessment and monitoring so that children make clear progress in all subjects.**

We have made good progress in developing our curriculum. Progressive skills based learning pathways in social studies and science are used to plan learning. Skills are being developed within the experiences and outcomes to ensure progress and opportunities for application across learning. All learners are actively engaged in their learning and are involved in planning, evaluating, identifying and selecting their next steps. Our lead learner in science worked collaboratively with cluster colleagues to produce templates to support science investigations across Early-Second Level. These are now being used across the school and cluster. In May 2016 we arranged an internal review of science and invited specialist staff from St. Margaret's Academy and the head teacher of neighbouring East Calder Primary to review our science programme, our tracking and monitoring and to monitor learning and teaching in science. This provided an opportunity for staff to engage in professional dialogue with their secondary colleagues. Our feedback was very positive; the team commented on the pupil's engagement, clear evidence of progression, differentiation and pupils using scientific vocabulary. Our pupils were able to talk confidently about their achievements and next steps. The review team noted that staff were tracking coverage of SALS and skills development in science. In the nursery our staff were able to demonstrate how science outcomes are covered through responding to the interests of the children. For example senses, seasons and gardening all provide opportunities for science investigations which are recorded in the nursery floor book and responsive planning records. As a result of our review we have an action plan to further develop our tracking and monitoring in science and social studies and feel confident that pupils are making significant progress in these areas.

Assessment is an integral part of planning for learning and teaching. A variety of assessment approaches enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in different contexts across the curriculum. Staff use assessment information and effective teacher/pupil dialogue to ensure learners are making good progress and know their next steps in learning. Tracking and monitoring across the school is well planned, and involves dialogue with pupils and staff, is relevant and manageable, and leads to improved learning. We have a robust cluster self-evaluation programme which allows us to evaluate our work and track all pupils. Staff use a wide range of assessment information to monitor progress and most pupils are making good or very good progress across the curriculum. Our highest achieving pupils and those on the continuum of support are assessed termly allowing us to plan interventions, provide additional support and challenge pupils to improve outcomes for individual learners.

Last session we developed a framework for outdoor learning. This provided opportunities for our staff to demonstrate leadership skills by taking forward aspects of the programme. Staff members visited other schools to observe best practice and engaged in professional dialogue within and beyond the school at the planning stages. They worked collegiately to develop opportunities for planned, purposeful outdoor learning experiences and engaged in moderation activities to evaluate their practice. This enabled the impact of emerging practice to be evaluated and further improved. We plan to build on this effective practice to continue to improve outcomes for learners. All pupils responded very well to the planned experiences and we noted a significant impact on pupil engagement across all stages particularly for pupils with additional support needs and those who require an alternative curriculum.

The outdoor learning experiences have provided opportunities for our learners to develop skills outlined in the four capacities and have resulted in very effective partnerships within and beyond the school.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, St. Paul's Primary RC Primary School is well placed to continue to improve with the children at the centre of its vision and values. The school is a nurturing and inclusive environment which promotes the GIRFEC agenda and respect for all. In St. Paul's Primary school staff have very high aspirations and expect learners to do their best, leading to almost all learners being very well behaved, motivated and engaged. Our school aims to develop in each individual their full potential within each of the four capacities.

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