



**West Lothian
Council**
Education Services

Kirknewton Primary School

**HMIE Progress Report
February 2015**

Contents

1. The Inspection

Education Scotland published a report on the inspection of Kirknewton Primary School in December 2012. The school, in collaboration with the Education Authority outlined priorities for improvement in the school improvement plan, which included recommendations from the report.

2. Continuous Improvement

The current head teacher was appointed in October 2014 and an acting principal teacher has been in post since May 2013. The school continues to work in partnership with the learning community and progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement. The senior management team consults and engages with parents, pupils, staff and other partners to improve the work of the school. Staff and pupils feel valued and the school continues to develop opportunities for the learning community to make important contributions to school improvement.

3. Progress towards the main points for action

- **Continue to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence**

The school continues to work towards ensuring structure and progression across all areas of the curriculum. Working groups have developed particular areas of the curriculum, including science, technologies and music. This is helping to strengthen the breadth and balance of the curriculum and support progression for all learners.

Staff are currently working to develop coherent planning and progression within reading and writing using West Lothian's curriculum pathway to ensure pupils are making appropriate progress in literacy. Through working collaboratively within the school and cluster, staff produced a whole school strategy to develop the skills of reading. This is helping to develop children's enthusiasm for reading and improve comprehension skills across the school. Classroom pedagogy is continuing to develop and teachers are now more confident using new strategies for teaching reading.

All staff have been trained in Stages of Early Arithmetic Learning (SEAL) methodology for the teaching of numeracy. This is impacting positively on the teaching and learning of early numeracy. Staff have noted, through ongoing assessment, an increase in pupils' knowledge and understanding of number and improved pace and challenge in learning.

Interdisciplinary learning takes place at all stages of the school, helping the children to link and apply their learning across curriculum areas. Smart Start activities also help the children to link learning.

In the nursery, a wide variety of challenges is provided for children, with a range of tasks and activities to meet their interests and extend their learning. Planning for children's learning is responsive, with staff using the observed information to plan appropriate next steps. Staff use the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence when planning the children's learning to ensure breadth, balance and progression in learning.

The school holds parental workshops and curriculum evenings to inform parents of curriculum developments allowing them to have a greater understanding of their children's learning experiences and how they can support them.

- **Further develop self-evaluation in order to improve the work of the school**

The senior management team carry out a range of monitoring activities to inform improvement planning by highlighting the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff use a range of tools to evaluate the work of the school and consult with all stakeholders to ensure everyone feels valued and involved in evaluating progress. The senior management team visit classes to observe learning and provide useful, evaluative feedback to staff to help them to improve learners' experiences

A recently introduced system for monitoring and tracking progress in learning is being used to ensure learners experience breadth, balance and progression across the curriculum. This will help teachers to monitor pace of progress of all children and to identify those who need additional support and challenge in their learning. Attainment, planning and progress are discussed and evaluated termly during meetings between senior managers and teachers. The meetings are evaluative, analytical and focussed on improvement.

Teachers are gaining confidence in reflecting on their own classroom practice and they participate in peer observations to share practice. Staff are involved in evaluating their own professional skills and qualities and this will be developed further in line with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards of professional development and professional update.

Staff have a clear, shared vision for the direction of the school and are involved in identifying and reviewing the priorities in the school improvement plan.

Parents are involved in the self-evaluation process of the school in a number of formal and informal ways including questionnaires, surveys and assemblies. The information gathered is used to improve practice and highlight the school's strengths and areas for development.

- **Support children to develop their understanding of learning and give them more responsibility for their learning**

Staff continue to organise learning activities well and help children to make links to their previous learning. Across the school, children take on a range of roles and responsibilities successfully helping to build their confidence and develop skills for learning, life and work. They participate enthusiastically in a range of activities and lead on action groups such as Eco Group, Rights Respecting Focus Group and Pupil Council.

There is a strong sense of responsibility for the wider community and the world beyond the school. The school engages with a number of local initiatives including working with local development trust to support development of citizenship skills in children. Links have been made with local businesses and these are used to enhance learning.

Teachers worked with the curriculum development officer and progress has been made in developing pupils' understanding of higher order thinking skills at second level, which helps, prepare them for the challenges of secondary school. Teachers are beginning to use these skills in other curricular areas, such as social subjects, to extend pupils' ability to think critically. Staff now need to further develop this so that there is greater consistency across the school.

The school is developing strategies to enable pupils to become more aware of their strengths and needs as learners. Staff have deepened their understanding of pupil progress in maths, enabling them to support learners effectively in identifying and setting personal targets. Feedback from staff and pupils shows this is impacting positively on engagement and achievement in maths.

Pupils engage in an increased range of reflection activities to develop personal responsibility for their learning. Pupil profiling in Primary 7 enables learners to discuss and reflect with their teacher and peers on how well they are progressing and how to improve. The school continues to work on embedding this approach through activities such as looking forward, looking back discussions and reflection diary entries. All children have learning journey folders within which they reflect upon their learning, select work to be included and with the help of their teacher identify next steps in their learning.

In the nursery, all children have good opportunities to share experiences at together time and develop social skills through appropriate play situations. They are able to make choices in their learning from a variety of activities, which support them in developing and applying skills in early literacy and numeracy. Nursery staff provide opportunities for children to take responsibility for planning and developing their learning, with almost all children fully engaged and achieving.

- **Improve communication to ensure that parents have a better understanding of the work of the school.**

The parent council engages positively in discussions relating to school improvement and shares this across the wider parent forum. Parental views are sought through discussion, questionnaires and feedback following events such as parental consultations ensuring that all stakeholders' views are considered. At the beginning of each session, parents are invited to a Meet the Teacher event where plans for the year are shared and discussed. Meetings are organised for specific curriculum areas various stages to ensure that parents are well-informed and able to support their children's learning.

Summaries of the standards and quality report and the school improvement plan are issued to all parents to promote a shared understanding of the work of the school. Progress with the school improvement plan is discussed at parent council meetings providing an opportunity for increasing parental engagement. Parent council minutes are shared via the parent council website keeping all parents fully informed of the work of the school.

Within the nursery, learner's journey folders are available to parents to keep them informed of their child's progress and development. Parents are encouraged to add to and share information within the documents. At a few stages of the school, weekly reflection diaries are sent home and at all other stages reflection folders are shared with parents at key times of the year.

A monthly newsletter is sent to all parents through parent mail and bag drop. Pupils enjoy sharing their learning with parents using the school blog and at some stages, open classroom events where they are keen to demonstrate their learning and understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kirknewton Primary School benefits from clear leadership shown by the head teacher and acting principal teacher, and is well placed to continue to improve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moira Niven', is positioned above the printed name.

Moira Niven
Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Area Services
February 2015