

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 18 June 2014

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services)

SUBJECT: Inspection of West Barns Primary School and Nursery Class by Education Scotland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the report by Education Scotland on the inspection of West Barns Primary School and Nursery Class.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland report (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Note the particular strengths of the school, its recent good progress and the strong start made by the new Head Teacher.
 - (iii) Note that Education Scotland will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within eighteen months of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 West Barns Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected in November 2013 by Education Scotland and a report was published in January 2014.
- 3.2 The report noted that the particular strengths of the school were:
- Enthusiastic children who are keen to learn and want to learn more.
 - The quality of outdoor learning experienced by the nursery class.
 - Committed, reflective and resilient staff.
 - Parents who are able and willing to support the school.

3.3 Education Scotland agreed the following areas for further improvement with the school and education authority:

- Develop the leadership skills and confidence of all staff.
- Work with parents to develop a shared understanding of what children in West Barns Primary School will learn and achieve.
- Improve overall attainment and continue to develop consistent approaches to meeting all children's needs.
- Put systems in place that will enable staff, children and parents to evaluate the overall work of the school.

3.4 The school has already taken positive steps to address the main points for action outlined in the report, these include:

- An Action Plan has been prepared to address the report's findings, this has led to:
 - Staff leadership roles developed within the school to take forward aspects of the action plan.
 - Work to develop shared vision, values and aims to inform developments, including curriculum developments.
 - Consistent programmes in place to better meet the needs of all learners and to improve attainment.
 - Systems in place to routinely self-evaluate to secure improvement and to involve staff, parents and children in this process.
- The school is working with Education Scotland and its Quality Improvement Officer to:
 - Improve knowledge and understanding of self evaluation as a key mechanism to drive school improvement.
 - Support and monitor progress with the school action plan.

3.5 The Quality Improvement Officer is meeting with the Head Teacher on a fortnightly basis to review the ongoing work in the school and provide advice and support as necessary.

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 The inspection of West Barns Primary School and Nursery Class (Appendix1).

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DATE	28 May 2014

21 January 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**West Barns Primary School and Nursery Class
East Lothian Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher had taken up post in August 2013 following an unsettled four-year period of changing leadership. We looked at the school's very recent work to identify successes and priorities for improvement. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children in the nursery class are very enthusiastic and motivated to learn. They take part in a wide and varied range of rich learning experiences. This includes, for example, the very good use of the outdoor area to explore and experiment. Children talk with confidence about their learning to each other and to staff. They listen well to stories. They show a good awareness of numbers, shapes and colours during their play. They are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Overall, from P1 to P7, children are developing good skills as learners. They are able to identify what it is they want to learn when beginning a new area of work and where they will go to find out what they want to learn. For example, following an exploratory lesson on the moon, children in P1 were able to identify what they wanted to learn next. Children have opportunities to work together in pairs and teams. In P5/P6/P7, for example, children worked very well in pairs to challenge each other on multiplication tables. Children respond very well to learning which is challenging and requires them to think for themselves. An example of this was observed in a P4/P5 science lesson where children were asked to identify sources of light and justify their decisions. Children are capable of taking on more responsibility for learning. In P2/P3, for example, children can lead learning in reading. In each class, children are developing good skills in literacy and numeracy but there is significant room to improve on current levels of attainment. Children have a reasonable understanding of health and their own and others' wellbeing but this could be developed further.

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

Staff in the nursery class have a very good understanding of child development and use this very effectively to shape how they respond to children's learning needs. This

includes working very well with parents and other agencies as needed. During the period of changing leadership, staff found it difficult to build on the very good start made in the nursery and to see progress sustained consistently through to P7. They have made a good start to improving how they meet children's learning needs and are committed to ensuring further improvement. This includes working with parents to identify how the specific learning needs of some children will be addressed over time. Staff know children well as individuals and provide a caring and supportive environment for them to develop and learn in. For each class, teachers plan a good range of often stimulating learning activities guided by Curriculum for Excellence advice. This includes good use of the school's substantial range of local community links. Building on current strengths, staff now need to have a clearer shared understanding of their vision for the curriculum in West Barns Primary School and what the outcomes for children will be.

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

The newly-appointed headteacher has made a very strong start. She is working with staff and parents to build productive relationships and to gather evidence to help all to evaluate priorities and set direction for the school. She has identified the need to put processes in place that will help staff to monitor children's progress during their time in West Barns Primary School and to improve the overall quality of the school's work. Staff are reflective and committed practitioners who have shown notable resilience in maintaining positive working relationships during recent years. They used the inspection process very constructively to support their own learning and are keen to extend their learning further. Children are able to take on responsibility and be actively involved in improvements to the wider school community. Parents are keen to support staff as they build capacity in West Barns Primary School.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Enthusiastic children who are keen to learn and want to learn more.
- The quality of outdoor learning experienced by the nursery class.
- Committed, reflective and resilient staff.
- Parents who are able and willing to support the school.

We discussed with staff and East Lothian Council how they might continue to improve the school and nursery class. This is what we agreed with them.

- Develop the leadership skills and confidence of all staff.
- Work with parents to develop a shared understanding of what children in West Barns Primary School will learn and achieve.
- Improve overall attainment and continue to develop consistent approaches to meeting all children's needs.
- Put systems in place that will enable staff, children and parents to evaluate the overall work of the school.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with East Lothian Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out a further inspection within eighteen months of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Joan Mackay
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/WestBarnsPrimarySchoolEastLothian.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.