

Report

Report to:	Clydesdale Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 August 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Education Scotland Report - Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the outcome of the inspection of Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class by Education Scotland inspectors

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Education Scotland report on Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected in December 2019 as part of a national sample of primary education.

3.2. As part of the revised approach to inspection, the Education Scotland inspectors evaluated the leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; raising attainment and achievement and ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

3.3. The inspection team analysed questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, pupils and to all staff. Inspectors observed class lessons and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council and staff. Members of the inspection team also met parents and members of the local community.

3.4. The report by Education Scotland was published on 10 March 2020.

4. Findings of HM Inspectors

4.1. Education Scotland made comment under the following headings:-

- ◆ quality of leadership and management
- ◆ learning provision
- ◆ children's successes and achievements

4.2 Evaluations for Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class: -

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Leadership of change	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good
Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Securing children's progress	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good

4.3. The strengths of the school and Nursery Class were identified as follows: -

- ◆ The welcoming, positive and inclusive ethos that supports very positive relationships throughout the school and nursery. This promotes mutual trust and respect
- ◆ The strong leadership and direction provided by the headteacher and senior leadership team across the school and nursery. This supports staff and partners to work together effectively to meet the needs of all children and their families
- ◆ The strong culture of professional learning and the positive impact this is having on the work of the school and nursery
- ◆ The range of opportunities for children to develop their physical and emotional wellbeing in and beyond the school and nursery. As a result, children are confident, resilient and eager to learn
- ◆ The positive way the nursery team have embraced change in the setting. This is leading to improved outcomes for children and their families

4.4. Education Scotland found that Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class provides children and young people with a good educational experience, this includes the experience of children in the Language and Communication Unit. The inspectors also reported that the headteacher provides very strong leadership and direction for the school community and is very well supported by her staff, especially the Depute Headteachers. They went on to report that the Headteacher is highly respected by children, parents, staff and the wider community. This was also reflected in the responses from parents to the questionnaire that they completed as part of the process.

4.5. The school's vision and values underpin the work of the school. It was noted that the senior leadership team regularly revisit these, with the involvement of all stakeholders, to ensure their continued relevance. This is reflected in learning experiences and drives school and nursery improvement priorities. They also reported that Blackwood Primary School and Nursery Class has a very warm, welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos and that relationships between all staff, children, parents and partners are very positive. A helpful visual 'nursery class charter', based on children's rights has been produced, resulting in positive relationships between practitioners, the children and their families. Overall, most children are settled and happy.

- 4.6. The school's strong commitment to outdoor learning was highlighted in the report as strengthening its approach to supporting children's mental and emotional wellbeing, leading to positive outcomes for children.
- 4.7. An effective and well-established transition programme supports children and young people at all key transition points across the nursery, school and Language and Communication Unit (LU). This was highlighted as being particularly effective when supporting children and young people enter and leave the Language and Communication Unit. Positive relationships between staff, children and their peers, is evident across the LU and the senior leadership team, with the support of the staff, ensure that the LU is included fully in all aspects of the work and life of the school.
- 4.8. As part of the revised school inspection model, schools are asked to identify an aspect of school empowerment which they would like to explore in more depth with the inspection team. This is not graded using the six-point scale but was identified as a particular strength of Blackwood Primary and Nursery School, who elected to focus on the empowerment of staff through professional learning. Inspectors noted that a very strong culture of professional learning and collegiate working is in place across the school and that senior leaders empower staff to continually improve their practice. They model a commitment to lifelong learning through their own practice. Teachers are empowered through their engagement in networks and learning communities to develop their professional practice collegiately.
- 4.9. Approaches to developing physical activity are a key strength of the school. Almost all children feel that the school teaches them to make healthy choices. The school provides a range of activities through effective partnership working with Active Schools. These enable children to engage in physical activity at lunchtimes and outwith the school day. As a result of this very strong commitment to physical activity, the school has achieved the SportScotland School Sport Award at gold level. It was also noted that Children are empowered to contribute to the development of health and wellbeing across the school through their involvement in learner participation groups, such as the Health Committee and Junior Road Safety Officers.
- 4.10. Education Scotland identified the following areas for continued improvement:-
- ◆ continue to develop a shared understanding of high quality learning, teaching and assessment to ensure the needs of all children are met
 - ◆ continue to develop approaches to support planning for improvement in the nursery to ensure that all children make the best possible progress in their development
- 4.11. As well as welcoming the strengths of the school it should be noted that the areas for continued improvement have already been incorporated into the school's improvement plan. Progress on the identified areas for improvement have and continue to be shared with parents.
- 4.12. Education Scotland have intimated that they are confident that the school will be able to take forward the areas for improvement and will make no more visits in connection with this report. The local authority has informed parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

4.13. Additional inspection evidence can be accessed by clicking the following web link <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=1675>

5. Employee Implications

5.1. None.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. None.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

7.1. There are no direct risks associated with this report which is provided for information only.

8. Other Implications

8.1. There are no direct risks associated with this report which is provided for information only.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

9.1. There is no requirement to carry out an assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.

9.2. The content of Education Scotland reports are shared with parents and discussed at Parent Council meetings.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

10 August 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Get it right for children and young people
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Education Scotland Report of 10 March 2020

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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