

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24TH SEPTEMBER 2012

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMle) INSPECTION OF DENS ROAD
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 356-2012

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of Education Scotland (HMle) following an inspection at Dens Road Primary School and Nursery Class.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Director of Education to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Dens Road Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected by Education Scotland in June 2012. They published a report on their findings on 21 August 2012. At the time of the inspection 260 children were on the Primary school roll and a further 71 children were receiving pre-school education in the nursery on either a part-time or a full day basis.

4.2 The inspectors identified the following strengths of the school and nursery class:

- Polite and well-mannered children who are motivated to learn and very much care for each other.
- Transition and early achievement in the nursery and at the early stages.
- The high priority given to care and welfare which helps create a very positive and inclusive environment for learning.
- Innovative approaches to learning at home.

4.3 The following areas for improvement were agreed with the school and education authority:

- Improve arrangements for meeting learning needs to ensure appropriate support and challenge for all children in the nursery and school.
- Further develop *Curriculum for Excellence* to deliver improvements in learning and assessment.
- Continue to develop self-evaluation and planning which leads to improvement in outcomes for all children.

4.4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 HMle reports using a six-point scale for reporting performance:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate/satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

4.4.2 The following quality evaluations were given at this inspection:

Quality Indicator	Primary School	Nursery Class
Improvements in performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Children's experiences	Good	Good
Meeting learning needs	Weak	Satisfactory
	For both the school and nursery class	
The curriculum	Satisfactory	
Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory	

4.5 Dens Road Primary School's *School Improvement Plan (2012-2015)* includes a focus on the identified areas for improvement. These will be regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement calendars.

4.6 HMle indicated that Dens Road Primary School and Nursery Class need additional support and more time to make the necessary improvements. Therefore, it is their intention to maintain contact and monitor progress via Education Scotland's District Inspector. It is also their intention to return to evaluate progress in improving provision within one year of the publication date of the report.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti-Poverty and Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

5.2 There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 The following Background Papers were relied upon in preparation of this Report:

- Education Scotland (HMle) Inspection Report For Dens Road Primary School And Nursery Class, Dundee City Council - August 2012.

MICHAEL WOOD
Director of Education

September 2012

21 August 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Dens Road Primary School and Nursery Class
Dundee City Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and we 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 shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including how well children learn and progress from nursery to school and how the organisation of classes helps them learn in mathematics. We also looked at how well children and teachers are using information and communications technology (ICT) to help children learn. 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?

In both the nursery and school, children feel very safe and well cared for. They show lots of care for others, for example through helping each other in the nursery get dressed for outdoor play or supporting one another in lessons in the school. Children and staff have very positive relationships with each another. All children are treated with respect and are fully included. Children at the upper stages support younger children well, through acting as buddies. Staff have created a very secure ethos for learning. Children are being encouraged to be more active and engaged in their learning. At times, children are not sure of the purpose of their learning, how well they are doing or what they need to do to make their learning better. The pupil council feel they were responsible for introducing a new and innovative approach to homework. There is scope to increase children's opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, for example through leading the pupil council. Commendably, the school is a litter free zone.

In some classes, children have personal folios where they are encouraged to store examples of their achievements and progress in literacy and numeracy. While this is a good start, it is not yet being used consistently across the school. Children are not yet sure enough what to add to their folio or why they are doing it. In the nursery and at the early stages, children are making good progress in their learning and development. It is not clear if this good start is being continued throughout the school. The school should ensure information recorded can show easily how much progress children are making in their learning.

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

Across the nursery and school, staff are developing the curriculum. Staff are becoming more confident in using national advice relating to Curriculum for Excellence. In the nursery and some classes, children are working with staff well to plan their own learning. Staff have worked with other local schools to develop literacy. Staff now need to work together to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are developed in a planned and systematic manner. The move from nursery to primary is well planned and effective. At times, staff use ICT well, however this could be developed further to enhance learning.

Staff know children and their families well. They meet children's social and emotional needs very well. A nurture room is very helpful for a few children. However, across the curriculum, staff do not plan well enough to meet the range of children's learning needs. At times, learning is too slow and lacks challenge, particularly for more able children. Teachers

organise learning in mathematics to meet children's needs better. This should now be reviewed to ensure that it is making a difference for all learners. All children with additional support needs, including those attending the nurture room, would benefit from individual planning and target setting to ensure they are making appropriate progress. The school works well with a range of partners to support individual children and the curriculum. With planning and a more systematic approach this could be better and have a greater impact on all children.

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

Staff are committed to the school and want the best for children. They work well together. The headteacher has a very clear vision for a caring and secure environment. The acting deputy headteacher has successfully introduced a number of changes and improvements, for example promoting positive behaviour. All staff have been working together to increase their understanding of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Class teachers value the time they spend in classes watching others teach. Much work however remains to be done to ensure that across the nursery and school self-evaluation is both robust and rigorous, firmly based on evidence. The quality assurance calendar which is in place is not always followed and is not yet leading to improvements in children's learning or achievement.

This inspection of the school and nursery class found the following key strengths.

- Polite and well-mannered children who are motivated to learn and very much care for each other.
- Transition and early achievement in the nursery and at the early stages.
- The high priority given to care and welfare which helps create a very positive and inclusive environment for learning.
- Innovative approaches to learning at home.

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

- Improve arrangements for meeting learning needs to ensure appropriate support and challenge for all children in the nursery and school.
- Further develop Curriculum for Excellence to deliver improvements in learning, teaching and assessment.
- Continue to develop self-evaluation and planning which leads to improvement in outcomes for all children.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the nursery and school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our District Inspector along with the local authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to evaluate aspects of provision and the progress in improving provision within one year of the publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the nursery and school has improved. In that letter we will inform you if we are going to carry out a continued inspection visit.

Elizabeth Morrison
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/DensRoadPrimarySchoolDundeeCity.asp>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.