

## REPORT TO KINCARDINE AND MEARNS AREA COMMITTEE 29 OCTOBER 2019

### EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION, NEWTONHILL SCHOOL.

#### 1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report details the findings and recommendations of the recent Short Model Inspection by Education Scotland at Newtonhill School.

#### 2 Recommendations

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the contents of the report;**
- 2.2 Endorse the Services continuing efforts in support of its school in the Education Scotland inspection process and in the raising of standards of attainment and achievement in all aspect of school life; and**
- 2.3 Agree to further reports on Education Scotland school inspections being presented.**

#### 3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 This report shares Education Scotland's evaluation of Newtonhill School and Nursery Class following inspection in April 2019 as part of a national sample of primary education (**Appendix 1** – Inspection Report).

The school inspection evaluated key aspects of the work of the school at all stages including:-

- Learning, teaching and assessment (school and nursery)
- Raising attainment and achievement (school)
- Securing children's progress (nursery)

- 3.2 Following inspection the Head Teacher will work with her senior leadership team and staff to implement recommendations. This will be informed by the inspection report and the school's self-evaluation procedures.

Guidance from Quality Improvement Officers and/or Managers, Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services Priorities, How Good is Our school 4, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, the National Improvement Framework Priorities and the local and national GIRFEC policies will support the implementation and accomplishment of all recommendations.

## 4 Discussion

4.1 As a result of the inspection, the Inspectors highlighted the following key strengths of Newtonhill School –

- The positive, supportive and inclusive ethos provided by the staff team and a calm, welcoming learning environment where relationships are characterised by mutual respect.
- The articulate, friendly children, who are embracing the increasing opportunities to play an active role in the school and nursery.
- The school's approaches to tracking children's progress and wellbeing. Led by the headteacher, staff are now well placed to use this information to raise attainment.

4.2 The inspection model is based on the school's own self-evaluation, and how this is used to focus on improving outcomes for our pupils. Over the course of the inspection process, the inspectors arrive at their own overall evaluations for the school in relation to the two Quality Indicators used in this new short inspection format. (Further details for the two Quality Indicators can be found in **Appendix 2**). In Newtonhill School and Nursery Class, the Inspectors' evaluations were as follows:

Newtonhill school	
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Newtonhill nursery	
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	satisfactory

4.3. The Inspectors also identified a number of areas where they felt the school should focus in order to improve the quality of education. These were: -

- Develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective, high quality teaching, learning at Newtonhill Primary.
- Raise attainment by using assessment information to inform high quality, planned learning and teaching, ensuring appropriate pace and challenge for all children.
- Develop in children a better understanding of themselves as learners and the skills they are developing.

4.4 The action plan to address these areas for improvement and to support the development of approaches to sharing good practice has begun and is incorporated into the school improvement planning documentation for school session 2019-20.

4.5 The Head Teacher will provide parents/carers with an update on progress of the school improvement plan as part of its annual standards and quality reporting arrangement and through ongoing engagement with the Parent Council.

- 4.6 The Inspectors are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Aberdeenshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.
- 4.7 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 4.8 The school is well supported by parents and the wider community and the school will involve and seek the views of all stakeholders in their improvement agenda. The report has been shared with parents.

## **5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk**

- 5.1 This report helps deliver Council Priority 3 - Providing the best life chances for all our children and young people by raising levels of attainment and achievement.
- 5.2 This report helps deliver all aspects of Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services Priorities: -
- Improving learning, teaching and assessment
  - Partnership working to raise attainment
  - Developing leadership at all levels
  - Improvement through self-evaluation
- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.4 There are no staffing, financial or policy implications arising directly from this report. It is intended that any costs will be met from existing budgets.
- 5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

### Learning Teaching and Assessment

- We will improve learning and teaching to facilitate better outcomes for pupils through developing a shared understanding of pedagogy, and the underlying methodologies that support the development of skills.
- We will continue to develop an increasingly strategic approach to ensuring the provision of well-matched learning experiences and appropriate pace and challenge for all children.

## **6 Scheme of Governance**

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B 1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to a matter of performance in relation to attainment and achievement which impacts on the Kincardine and Mearns Area.

**Laurence Findlay**  
**Director of Education and Children's Services**

Report prepared by Lesley Tullock, Head Teacher  
Date 25 September 2019

**List of Appendices –**  
Appendix 1 - Inspection Report  
Appendix 2 – Details of Quality indicators

## Appendix 1



Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Newtonhill School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The positive, supportive and inclusive ethos provided by the staff team. Together, they create a calm, welcoming learning environment where relationships are characterised by mutual respect.
- The articulate, friendly children, who are embracing the increasing opportunities to play an active role in the school and nursery.
- The school's approaches to tracking children's progress and wellbeing. Led by the headteacher, staff are now well placed to use this information to raise attainment.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeenshire Council.

- Develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective, high quality teaching, learning at Newtonhill Primary.
- Raise attainment by using assessment information to inform high quality, planned learning and teaching, ensuring appropriate pace and challenge for all children.
- Develop in children a better understanding of themselves as learners and the skills they are developing

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Newtonhill School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Securing children's progress</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:  
<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/aberdeenshire/5251028>

### What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Aberdeenshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Pamela Adamson  
HM Inspector

## Appendix 2

How Good is our School (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare

Quality Indicators

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (HGIOS4)

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching z Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement (HGIOS4)

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment (HGIOELC)

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of interactions
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning tracking and monitoring

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised.

### 3.2 **Securing children's progress (HGIOELC)**

- Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing
- Children's progress over time
- Overall quality of children's achievement
- Ensuring equity for all children

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success.