

REPORT TO BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 15TH March 2022

MEETHILL SCHOOL AND NURSERY REVIST FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

Meethill School was revisited by Education Scotland on the 9th of November 2021. This was a follow-up visit after the original inspection in November 2019. The report of the visit acknowledged the effective and supportive contribution made by the staff team throughout the Covid pandemic and the progress that had been achieved in addressing the recommendations made following the 2019 inspection. Education Scotland do not feel sufficient progress has been made however to allow for disengagement at this stage and will re-visit the school again in early 2023.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1. Consider and comment on the contents of this report.

1.2.2 Endorse the Service's continuing efforts in support of its schools in the Education Scotland Inspection process and securing positive outcomes for all children and young people beyond the process of inspection.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 During the initial visit in November 2019, Education Scotland Colleagues talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the Head Teacher and staff within the school. They gathered evidence to evaluate the school under the following areas:

- **Learning, teaching and assessment-**

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. The themes are: learning and engagement, quality of teaching, effective use of assessment, planning, tracking and monitoring.

- **Raising Attainment and Achievement-**

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. The themes are: attainment in literacy and numeracy, attainment over time, overall quality of learners' achievement, equity for all learners.

2.2 The inspection model followed in November 2021 is based on a previous visit to the school in November 2019 and from the school's own self-evaluation, and how this is used to focus on improving outcomes for young people in line with the Curriculum for Excellence. Over the duration of the visit, Education Scotland colleagues gather evidence and present their evaluation of the school in relation to the quality indicators taken from "How Good is Our School 4" and "How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare".

2.3 From the previous visit in November 2019, the following recommendations for continued improvement were made:

- Improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff should establish a clear strategy to raise attainment and achievement for all children across the school and nursery class which increases expectations of standards and progression in learning.
- Work as a team to ensure all children experience high quality learning and teaching.
- Staff should ensure all children have increased opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress.

2.4 Education Scotland indicated that they planned to revisit the school in the spring term 2021. This was delayed due to Covid restrictions.

The original report from 2019 and the details for the follow up visit in November 2021 are available on the Education Scotland Website.

3. Discussion

The inspection findings from November 2021 visit found the following:

3.1 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Throughout this challenging period, the staff at Meethill Primary School and Nursery Class have been proactive in their efforts to support the school community. They have engaged with children and families online, in hubs and via phone calls and doorstep visits. This has helped to maintain

communication and strengthen relationships. During the periods of remote learning, staff developed their own technology skills to enable them to use online platforms effectively. They continue to work together to identify the learning and wellbeing needs of children and provide support for the school community. The staff support and encourage each other throughout this process, building capacity within the staff team.

3.2 Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The staff at Meethill Primary School and Nursery Class were asked to work as a team to ensure all children experience high quality learning and teaching. They are beginning to make progress in addressing this area for improvement but the quality of children's experiences is not yet consistent across all stages.

- 3.2.1 Class teachers are now collaborating more frequently on planning and assessing learning and teaching. This is helping to establish agreed expectations of standards. They are now using a wider range of questioning and assessment strategies to promote and evaluate learning. To further improve the quality of learning and teaching, staff should consistently provide children with appropriate levels of support and challenge. The leadership team needs to ensure that there is an effective and consistent approach to planning learning across the school. This will support children's progression within subject areas and across the curriculum.
- 3.2.2 The staff increasingly evaluate their own work and are developing a shared understanding of effective learning and teaching. They take part in professional learning, led by colleagues and the local authority, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on their practice. They should now monitor and evaluate how their own professional development contributes to improvements in children's learning experiences.
- 3.2.3 Children in the early primary stages now spend more time learning through play, and technology is being used more frequently across the school to engage and motivate learners. The staff should build on this positive start and continue to develop and refine these approaches. This will involve ensuring consistency and providing the correct level of support and challenge for all children.
- 3.2.4 During the original inspection, it was highlighted that children should be given increased opportunities to lead and evaluate their own learning. Staff are at the early stages of taking this recommendation forward. Children understand the purpose of their learning but are not yet fully involved in assessing their own progress. Staff are now beginning to incorporate an element of choice into tasks. As a next step, it will be important to ensure that the choices provided are meaningful and appropriately matched to children's learning needs.

3.2.5 The staff at Meethill Primary School and Nursery Class were asked to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy. It was recommended that they establish a clear strategy to raise attainment and achievement for all children which increases expectations of standards and progression in learning. The school is at an early stage in addressing this area for improvement. Staff are developing their use of assessment approaches and as a result, attainment data is now becoming more accurate. The leadership team have introduced a new system of tracking children's progress which is helping to inform staff discussions about attainment. However, the school does not yet have an established and consistent approach to improving attainment and achievement. Attainment still remains too variable.

3.2.6 Meethill Primary School and Nursery Class need more time to take forward the recommendations from the original inspection. We recognise that all schools have faced significant challenges as a result of COVID-19. Staff at Meethill have supported the school community throughout this difficult period. The leadership team and staff should now work collaboratively to improve children's learning experiences and attainment. Education Scotland will carry out another visit to the school within one year of the publication of this letter.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 Council Priorities

Pillar Priority

Our People Education, Health and Wellbeing

4.2 Other Priorities

This report helps to deliver the following Council Priority of "Securing continuous improvement in outcomes for ALL children and young people".

4.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			x
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing			x
Town Centre First			x

- 4.4 There are no financial/resource implications with this report.
- 4.5 There are no staffing implications with this report.
- 4.6 An integrated impact assessment is not required as there are no risks or implications associated with this report.

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section B1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it permits the Committee to consider, comment on, and make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its Area.

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Director of Education & Children's Services

Report prepared by John Black, Headteacher, Meethill School.
Date 28th February 2022

Links –

1. Original inspection report from November 2019 can be found by following the link below:
[Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)
2. The inspection findings from November 2021 can be found by following the link below:
[Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)