

Education & Learning Directorate

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: DISTRICT\INFO\QI\INDICES\ES\REPORTS\
A&E\NEWINGTON PS\LET001-JB\EB\RL

22 January 2021

To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at
Newington Primary School**

Any enquiries please contact:

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Dear Parent / Carer

**LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF NEWINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL SINCE
THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF 14 JANUARY 2020**

Newington Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in September 2019. The inspection focussed on leadership of change; learning, teaching and assessment; ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and children's attainment and achievements.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Skills, Education and Learning Directorate, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by Newington Primary School since the publication of the Education Scotland report in January 2020. The report highlighted three main aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these points.

Improve the strategic leadership of the school and nursery. Involve all staff and nursery practitioners in prioritising and leading developments which result in better outcomes for all children.

The Nursery Improvement Plan created by the Nursery Manager is driving forward improvements with a clear vision and delegated leadership roles. The improvement plan is developing the quality of practice, including delivery of Education and Learning interventions such as Talking, Listening and Questioning (TLQ), English as An Additional Language Intensive Programme (EALIP), Play on Pedals, Words Together, Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) and Developing Number Knowledge to narrow the

attainment gap. Online learning journals are supporting partnerships with parents, engaging them in their child's learning.

Whole school evaluation of the previous School Improvement Plan helped to establish appropriate targets for Session 20/21, based around ongoing school development and Education Scotland's recommendations. The impact of this has been greater stakeholder involvement in the process. Continued work on curricular planning and the encouragement of flexibility has allowed staff to develop areas of particular pupil interest and local, national and global matters. This has enhanced pupil engagement and involvement in curricular development.

A staff development programme around questioning and Higher Order Thinking has encouraged all staff and children to look at how questioning can deepen learning.

Practitioners need to improve their approaches to self-evaluation in the nursery class to ensure that they have a greater understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. Practitioners should use information gathered to drive forward necessary and continuous improvements to enable children to make the best possible progress.

The Nursery Manager has completed Education and Learning's 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' (HGIOELC?) professional learning and has used this to develop regular self-evaluation with the staff team. Robust evidence from staff and parents' feedback, learners' voice and progress in learning, external agencies such as Educational Visitors, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy is used in evaluation. Actions from evaluation meetings are implemented for continuous improvement.

'Planning in the Moment' professional learning for all staff has developed a more responsive, holistic and child led learning approach. Children's interests and ideas are at the heart of learning and they direct their own learning journey through play that is captured using 'Evidence Me' online learning profiles. Children are beginning to be able to talk about their learning.

Reflective discussions from practice observations by the Nursery Manager and Depute Headteacher twice yearly are used in regular one to one staff development professional dialogue to develop progressive targets and improve the quality of practice and learning for children. This approach is informing the professional learning needs of the nursery team and these are addressed through In-Service training.

Improve the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring and use of assessment information to inform how staff plan children's learning and raise their attainment.

All children in nursery have an 'Evidence Me' online learning profile where observations are recorded. This learning profile is linked to Curriculum for Excellence Early Level Benchmarks. 'Assessing Developmental Milestones' is also used to track children's skills. Progress against the milestones is then recorded on the school tracking system twice yearly by key group workers. Staff have responsibility to use this information to evaluate

learning and assess progress. This approach is informing the intentional planning activities which are offered along with planning in the moment to raise attainment.

All new entrants to the nursery are assessed for Talking, Listening and Questioning (TLQ) and the Senior Practitioner delivers the programme, tracking and monitoring the child's progress to inform support, planning and updates to school tracking. This ensures a more robust record and targeted support for children in their learning, identifying areas of support to narrow the attainment gap. Weekly communication with parents with activities for home is developing partnership with parents. Two further members of staff and the Nursery Manager are engaged in TLQ professional learning. The Senior Practitioner also assesses children's numeracy baselines to raise attainment in numeracy through use of 'Developing Number Knowledge' strategies with children and staff, targeting support and planning the nursery environment.

The school's Senior Management Team worked with Education Officers to review examples of tracking and monitoring systems. Further to this, a staff working group produced a model for whole staff review and discussion. This allowed all staff the opportunity to be involved in the process and to make the tracking and monitoring system appropriate for the school's community and context. The revised format provides the basis for attainment meetings, and staff and pupil discussion about progress in learning. The data helps to inform next steps in learning and direct interventions to raise attainment. This is providing a more strategic and accurate overview of pupil progress in all curricular areas over time.

All staff have agreed a programme of Senior Management Team and peer observations to support regular professional dialogue around features of highly effective practice. This will retain focus on continuing improvement in the quality of learning and teaching. Pupil profiles and the assessment of wider achievement have been reviewed and revised by staff groups, improving monitoring and tracking of these aspects across the school and where appropriate, targeting resources and funding to support pupils.

Due to the COVID pandemic, much of this development activity has taken place during the period of school closure and the main focus has been on the recovery phase. As a result, some areas will require further input and development; however, Newington Primary School demonstrates good capacity for future improvement. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of the Headteacher, Depute Headteachers, Nursery Manager, staff and children. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on their progress over the last year.

Yours sincerely

Jim Brown
Head of Education (Curriculum & Quality) and Chief Education Officer