

# Applegrove Primary School

## Education Scotland Continuing Engagement Inspection Visit (June 2018) following initial inspection (March 2017)

### Authority commentary

#### 1. Background

Applegrove Primary School was initially inspected in March 2017 (Inspection report published, June 2017) as reported previously to Children and Young People's Services Committee on 23 August 2017 (para 18 of the minute refers) by a team of inspectors from Education Scotland. During the two day visit, Education Scotland inspectors talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Headteacher and staff.

Education Scotland gathered evidence to enable them to evaluate aspects of the quality of leadership and children's achievements. The Education Scotland Inspection team at that time used selected Quality Indicators (QIs) from "How good is our school? 4<sup>th</sup> edition" (HGIOS4), rated using the six-point scale. These are:

- QI 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
- QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

This inspection also included focus on QI 2.1 Safeguarding, where only commentary is provided by Education Scotland for this aspect as opposed to any grading.

#### 2. March 2017 – Education Scotland Inspection Visit (Inspection report published June 2017)

In March 2017 with inspection findings published in June 2017, Applegrove Primary School was rated as weak for QI 1.1 and weak for QI 3.2. An area for development for Safeguarding was agreed. Education Scotland liaised with Moray Council thereafter regarding the school's capacity to improve and intimated their intention to carry out a further inspection of the school in discussion with Moray Council.

In March 2017, the inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Polite, friendly, well behaved children who are motivated to learn and proud of their achievements in school and the local community.
- Warm, caring relationships between children and staff leading to a school culture where children feel safe, happy and valued.
- High quality targeted support for children accessing the 'Wee Room'. This is leading to positive outcomes in children's wellbeing and progress with their learning.

The following areas for improvement were agreed with the Headteacher and a representative from Moray Council:

- The school needs to take a more rigorous and focussed approach to self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning. Led by the Headteacher, the school must adopt a more collaborative approach to measuring the quality of its work. In particular, there is a need to better gather the views of children, parents and partners on the quality of school provision.
- Raise attainment and achievement of children, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Further develop approaches to assessment and agreeing of standards to effectively track children's progress with their learning.
- Increase leadership opportunities for staff, children and parents in taking forward school improvement priorities.
- Ensure learning activities have appropriate pace and challenge for all children. More innovative approaches to learning and teaching should be encouraged and shared across the school.

### 3. Post – inspection support and change

Senior Leaders and staff have worked together in addressing key areas for improvement, supporting positive changes and leading forwards improvements to learning and teaching, and curriculum. Applegrove Primary School has worked with the local authority, the latter providing support and challenge of school improvement agenda and activities. This has included support in preparing a comprehensive School Improvement Action Plan in order to address the five key areas for improvement, targeted support for school improvement areas and rigorous School Improvement Action Planning Reporting and critique. Additional targeted support has included supplementing school approaches to self-evaluation for self-improvement, developing systems for tracking and monitoring of pupil progress and achievements, increased rigour through a comprehensive QIO learning visit programme for supporting learning and teaching, and provision of wider school support.

### 4. June 2018 – Education Scotland Continuing Engagement Inspection Visit

Education Scotland returned to inspect Applegrove Primary School (Continuing Engagement) in June 2018. The Quality Improvement Officer linked with the school was also invited to join with Education Scotland as a member of the team for the two day inspection visit, focusing on the five areas for improvement agreed in the March 2017 inspection.

Through this inspection visit, it is noted that the Senior Leadership team and staff have worked well with the local authority on areas for improvement identified, with staff leading on a range of curriculum, learning and teaching and wider school improvement areas. Staff are keen to take on board local and national advice and good practice as a means for school improvement for strengthened learning experiences. The Enhanced Provision (the 'Wee Room') continues to provide strong support to children. Increased rigour in school tracking and monitoring and associated data analysis has led to interventions in support of children, with strategies implemented for raising attainment. Staff are improving approaches to assessment of children's progress, engaging with National Benchmarks, with staff engaging in leadership opportunities to help improve the school further. Through

staff working groups, planning for progression in curriculum areas has progressed and children have greater opportunities for leadership across the school. Using the Applegrove Learning Cycle, consistency in learning, teaching and assessment is building with positive environment and climate for learning found across classes. Teachers across the school work well together to plan learning, teaching and assessment.

It is noted that there is a need to continue to develop how well staff challenge learners and improve the pace of learning in classes. There is an urgent need for progression pathways in all curricular areas to support staff to help children build on their learning as they progress through the school. Staff across the school should also now focus all activities to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

## 5. Next steps

Education Scotland have noted that Applegrove Primary School has made progress since the original inspection. Education Scotland will ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection. This local authority report will inform any future decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement which may include another inspection visit, subject to continued progress. When such a decision is made, Education Scotland will write to parents/carers once again, detailing further improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with The Moray Council, that Education Scotland intend to take.

In order to further support the school, a revised School Improvement Action Plan has been prepared in partnership with the local authority following Continuing Engagement visit in June 2018. Working in partnership with local authority central Education Officers, the school continue to maintain focus at pace on this improvement agenda. Staff at Applegrove Primary School continue to be fully committed to actions identified by Education Scotland, working collegiately together in order to support school improvement for all.

In June 2019, a local authority report will be prepared and submitted to Education Scotland, detailing further progress made on improvement actions identified for review and action by Education Scotland as appropriate.

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