Present: - Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman), V. Davidson, F. Renton.
In Attendance:- Chief Education Officer, Democratic Services Officer (F Henderson).

GALASHIELS ACADEMY
In Attendance:- Mr. K. Ryalls (Headteacher), Mr. M. Timmins (Parent Council Representative), Gillian McKenzie (Senior Lead Officer), Councillor White
Apologies:- Councillors J. Mitchell and A. Nicol.

WELCOME
1. The Chairman welcomed the Galashiels Academy representatives to the meeting.

HMie Report
2. There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Education Officer to consider the findings of the HMie inspection report in respect of Galashiels Academy. Also circulated were a letter issued to parents/carers in June 2013, a letter issued to parents/carers in March 2015 summarising the inspection outcomes, and a summary of the Questionnaire Results. The report outlined the findings of the inspection carried out in March 2015, in terms of the school’s particular strengths as well as the key points for action. The key strengths identified were: (a) Overall the quality of the young people’s learning experiences had improved; (b) there had been a positive shift in the culture and ethos of the School; (c) most young people continued to enjoy school and were keen to learn; (d) Teachers shared the purpose of learning more regularly with young people and provided more regular feedback to help young people make better progress in their learning; (e) there was a greater consistency in approaches to encourage young people to think for themselves and be active in their own learning; (f) Staff engaged more regularly in professional discussions to share effective practice; (g) the ‘consistency’ poster, displayed in all classrooms, outlined the features of learning and teaching that were expected in all lessons and Staff were starting to use this poster to promote positive behaviour and high expectations; (h) Young people at all stages were benefitting from improved opportunities for leadership and were developing their confidence as they take part in groups such as learning ambassadors, house groups and the senior team.

2.1 The Headteacher reported on the progress made since the inspection and that staff and pupils were excited about the progress and future plans. There had been a re-structuring of Senior Management staff and the appointment of two Depute Headteachers for the Senior Phase and Pupil Support and the appointment of a Principal Teacher for Learning Support. A re-structure of middle management was progressing and the Headteacher had worked hard to retain good staff who were very committed to the school. In terms of attainment, there were more qualifications available and more to aim for. Attendance had improved through challenging non-attendance and working with Partners and Parents. Working hard to reduce exclusions and there were action plans with all departments. Also challenging staff performance. S6 attainment learning conversations and learning calendar. Connect Zone had been established to monitor group of learners at risk, which tracked and monitored S4 pupils who were disengaged and provide support to allow them to get further qualifications -
pupils were not just conforming but were finding their own voice. Sensory support centre for pupils with complex barriers to learning. The Parent Council representative reported that he had been in the school in terms of employability for connect zone and reported that pupils enjoyed being at school and were developing skills for life and further education whether within the work place or at University. The environment of school conversations with Senior Pupils about improvements and discussions with Headteachers were actioned.

2.2 The Senior Lead Officer reported that the report was an interim report from the inspectorate and was a fact finding exercise and confident that the team would move the school forward. The Headteacher answered questions and the Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and commended them on the progress they had made in relation to the points for action identified.

**DECISION AGREED:**

(a) to acknowledge the improvements that had taken place to date;
(b) that the school continue to provide opportunities for young people to have a say in the way they learn;
(c) that the school continue to monitor the number and level of qualifications that young people were presented for;
(d) that the school continue to develop the quality of Individual Educational plans (IEPs); and
(e) that Children and Young People’s Services monitor progress in accordance with normal procedures.

WEST LINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

In attendance:- Jill Doyle, (Headteacher); Mr. T. Crompton (Parent Council Representative), Liz Wharton (Senior Lead Officer);
Apologies:- Councillor Archibald, Councillor Bhatia, Councillor Cockburn.

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the West Linton Primary School representatives to the meeting.

**HMie Report**

3. There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Education Officer to consider the findings of the HMie inspection report in respect of West Linton Primary School. Also circulated were a letter issued to parents/carers in October 2015, the School Improvement Plan and the School Improvement Report. The key strengths identified were:
(a) both primary stages and nursery class almost all children had positive learning experiences; (b) Children in the nursery class talk together confidently and are enjoying learning about pirates; (c) children were developing skills of independence and making choices about what they want to learn through a wide range of play materials and activities on offer; (d) most children were purposefully engaged with play activities both indoors and outdoors; (e) the newly established nursery staff team were working effectively with the principal teacher and reviewing profiles of children’s development and learning at the early level. Independence and making choices skills were being developed; (f) at the primary stages, almost all children were engaged well in their learning and enjoyed learning at school; (g) they are developing skills for learning through becoming increasingly reflective about the ways in which they learn and can evaluate how well they are achieving and are expected to think about how they can continue to improve; (h) this was particularly effective in numeracy lessons where expectations are high, the pace of learning was brisk and children are benefiting from working collaboratively in small groups – overall, children are
motivated and actively involved in their learning. It was reported that teaching approaches had greatly improved and children were clear about what they were learning and when they have been successful. The staff were asked to continue to further develop the use of learning logs and identify next steps for learners.

3.1. The Headteacher reported that at the time of the inspection it had been a completely new team and this had been recognised by the inspectorate. A head practitioner had been appointed for Early Years and there was already significant progress in this area. The Headteacher highlighted the positive welcoming environment. There was weekly information sent to Parents and Focus Groups established – which sought parents views through survey monkey after focus group meetings. An ELC skills database for Parents who could not always attend at School but could support in other ways had been established. There was a better understanding of attainment from young people and staff and a learning wall for everyone to see and celebrate achievements. Staff better understood that self evaluation was at the core of everything and tracking learning had improved. Planning was now in consultation with the young people and the children were leading and learning. The Library had been improved through the support of the Parent Council and opened at lunchtime as requested by pupils and P7’s staffed this. Strong links had been established with Priorsford Primary School, partnerships within the village had been developed and the Tweeddale Learning Board were beginning to include the children.

3.2. The Senior Education Officer reported that the impact of Mrs Doyle’s appointment was evident to see and there was great enthusiasm from the management team and less staff absences as a result of the improved morale. The Parent Council representative reported that the School had improved significantly in the past two years and the Headteacher put a lot of effort into improving the school. A very positive report from a parent visiting to enrol her their child, the Headteacher blog was valued by parents and communication was much improved and varied. Responsibility had been spread out throughout Primary 7 i.e. representative attended Parent Council meetings and House Captains had been replaced by the appointment of Ministers. Due to a drop in pupils, staff had been lost, although it was hoped that the improving school reputation and the housing development would increase pupil rolls again. Parent Evenings were very targeted for the individual pupil and parents were much happier with the direction the school was moving in, although there was still more to be done. The Headteacher answered questions and the Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and commended them on the progress they had made in relation to the points for action identified.

DECISION
(a) RECOGNISE the strong leadership of the Headteacher.

(b) AGREED:-

(i) to commend West Linton Primary School for the hard work undertaken in achieving due recognition for its key strengths;

(ii) that the Children and Young People’s Services continue to monitor progress and support the work of the school on action in accordance with normal procedures.

(c) NOTED that the action plan in respect of West Linton would form part of the school improvement plan for 2015-16.

ST JOSEPH’S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
In Attendance:- Mrs. K. Gray (Headteacher), Helen Ross (Senior Lead Officer), Moira Robertson, Enhanced Support Team, Councillor Edgar.
Apologies:- Councillor Ballantyne
The Chairman welcomed the St Joseph’s RC Primary School representatives to the meeting. There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Education Officer to consider the findings of the HMIe inspection report in respect of St Joseph’s Primary School.

HMIe Report

4. There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Education Officer to consider the findings of the HMIe inspection report in respect of St Joseph’s RC Primary School. Also circulated were a letter issued to parents/carers in October 2013, a letter issued to parents/carers in December 2014, a letter issued to parents/carers in December 2015, a summary of the questionnaire results, the School improvement Plan 2015/16. The key strengths identified were: (a) children continued to be given some responsibility in school for their learning; (b) the majority of children work well on their own and at times in groups (c) Children continue to learn outdoors for various aspects, including rugby; (d) staff have plans to re-establish more outdoor learning and to make better use of the garden area. The many changes which had taken place since the last inspection had had an impact on the pace of improvements and how well the children had been learning and achieving. Children had reported that they did not always enjoy learning as they felt that they had had too many different teachers with different approaches to learning. Children were observed to not always treat each other and adults with respect and overall, their behaviour in and around the school required to be improved.

4.1 The Headteacher reported that she had been appointed in 2013, however a long period of absence had resulted in temporary staff being appointed. The inspection had taken place shortly after her return to the school and at the beginning of the new 2015/16 term. In terms of improvements, it was reported that appointments had been made for a Depute Headteacher and a permanent class teacher. There had been a move from 2 classes to one large multi-stage class from P1 to P7 which had a significant impact on the young learners and not all positive. Many P7’s did not like the single class and teacher and had expressed this to the inspectorate. There were 25 pupils and this was expected to reduce next term. Behaviour had improved and there were less management referrals for behaviour. There was a disproportionate number of children with additional needs attending the school and more learning support time was required. The newly appointed class teacher had very exciting ideas and the Headteacher was working with her and the enhanced support team to deliver these. Children were reported to be enjoying and being active in their learning and progress was being made with development of the curriculum and high quality learning and teaching. A pupil parliament had been established and the School had been awarded the Eco Schools Bronze medal. Support for the Headteacher provided by SBC Enhanced Support Team had been significant in enabling things to come together and while the report was not what the School wanted they felt in a stronger position to move forward.

4.2 The Parent Council representatives were unable to attend but sent a written response. The Parents in St Joseph’s Primary Schools welcomed the engagement of the Education Scotland Inspectors within the school and continued to have confidence in the Headteacher and ongoing management of the school. They were pleased that staffing was more stable with the appointment of a permanent class teacher and the support being offered to the school with enhanced management time and a 2nd teacher. The Parent Council strongly felt that they wished the school, to remain a two teacher setting in 2016/17 session in order that the children’s needs were met and the improvements put in place could be embedded. There was excellent communication between the school and parents and the management team were very approachable. The Parent Council were very aware of the challenges that had impacted on the school and recognised the work undertaken to address and improve these.

4.3 The Chairman advised that the report had not recognised the difficulties within the School. The Senior Lead Officer acknowledged that the past few months had been challenging, however the commitment of the class teacher and the recognition that there were problems
which required to be addressed and the support provided on a temporary basis had derived some improvement. The had been disappointment that the inspection had taken place so soon into the new term and there would be a further inspection in March 2016. The Headteacher answered questions and the Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and commended them on the progress they had made in relation to the points for action identified.

**DECISION**

(a) **AGREED:-**

(i) to commend St Joseph’s Primary School for the hard work undertaken in achieving due recognition for its key strengths;

(ii) that Children and Young People’s Services closely monitor progress on action plans to ensure key priorities are achieved; and

(iii) that a Communications Strategy be developed for celebrating the Schools Successes and achievements.

(b) **NOTED** that the action plan in respect of St Joseph’s would form part of the school improvement plan for 23015/16.

*Meeting concluded 12.45 p.m.*