

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EDUCATION PERFORMANCE (HMle) SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION
PERFORMANCE (HMle) SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St.
Boswells on 12 March 2015 at 10.30 am.

Present: - Councillors S Aitchison (Chairman)
Apologies:- Councillors B Herd, F Renton.
In Attendance:- Service Director Children and Young People (D Manson), Chief Officer Strategy &
Policy Development (Y McCracken) (Senior Planning, Policy and Performance
Officer) S Yates, Democratic Services Officer (JTurnbull).

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. The report was withdrawn.

ST BOSWELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

In attendance:- Councillors J Brown, S Scott, R Stewart;
Margaret Nailen (Headteacher); Christine Brown (Senior Education Officer);
James Denne (Parent Council representative).

WELCOME

2. The Chairman welcomed the St Boswells Primary School representatives to the meeting.

HMle Report

3. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer Schools to consider the findings of the HMle inspection report in respect of St Boswells Primary School, following the inspection on 12 May 2014. Also circulated were copies of a letter to parents/carers of pupils regarding the inspection, the Record of Inspection Findings, the School Improvement Report 2014/15 and the School Improvement Plan 2014/15. The report outlined the findings of the inspection in terms of the school's particular strengths as well as the key points for action. The key strengths identified were: The caring and supportive ethos created by the headteacher and school staff which provided children with a happy learning environment; Very well behaved children who were keen to learn and enjoyed school; The promotion of pupil voice which informed school improvements. The main points for action were defined as: Continue to develop the curriculum to make it more relevant and challenging for children; To continue to develop approaches to self-evaluation, including assessment and tracking children's learning, to further improve children's achievement.
4. The headteacher, Mrs Nailen, explained how the points for action defined in the HMle report had been addressed. In terms of developing the curriculum, maths was now delivered in a pathway format which had helped in progression across the school, the previous programme had been based on one particular resource and this had now been widened to ensure delivery in more relevant and meaningful contexts. Social Studies' plans had been redesigned to promote interdisciplinary learning and relevance to the children's locality and life experience. Development of crucial reading skills would continue; the working group had produced a toolkit which had been shared with all teachers and would encourage children to be more evaluative in their reading. Moderation work in reading had also been completed, moderating the pace of reading across the school and the reading programme would be further extended.
5. Mrs Nailen went on to discuss the second action which referred to assessment and tracking children's learning. The school had taken forward formative assessment, ensuring that there was a consistent format in all classes. Children were also given feedback in what they could do to improve their learning, they were looking in particular to challenge the more able learners. Class observations had increased, there would be five observations in classrooms

this year; every visit identified formal actions which would be followed up before the next visit. The school were adapting their planning to be more focused, regular and more responsive. New systems had been introduced for tracking in pathways and there was an increased use of standardised assessments through the introduction of PIPS & INCAS. Mrs Nailen concluded by stating the school would continue to work on curriculum mapping, interdisciplinary learning, critical reading, mental maths and the promotion of high quality learning and teaching in all classes.

6. The Parent Council representative, Mr Denne, advised that feedback from the Parent Council was positive. The school was a happy school with an excellent team and should be praised for their drive to improve the school and the way in which they had dealt with challenges.
7. In response to Members' questions, Mrs Nailen advised that homework consolidated the learning that had been taught in the school. The homework provided was interesting and engaging for pupils and kept parents informed and involved. The inspection process had been fair, and the process had allowed the school to take stock and make progress. The representatives were thanked for their attendance and commended on the progress they had made in relation to the points for action identified.

DECISION AGREED:-

- (a) **to commend Mrs Nailen, Headteacher and her staff at St Boswells Primary School for the hard work undertaken in achieving due recognition for the key strengths;**
- (b) **to continue to develop teaching and learning within the school. Ensuring consistency across all stages and more effective feedback to pupils ensuring they know their next steps in learning;**
- (c) **to ensure attainment was raised in all key stages for all groups of learners, and the effective use of tracking and monitoring across the school to raise attainment; and**
- (d) **to continue to develop curricular planning and interdisciplinary learning across the whole curriculum.**

KNOWEPARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

In attendance:- Councillor G Edgar, Maria McGinley (Headteacher);
Christine Brown (Senior Education Officer); Diane Brown (Parent Council Representative).

WELCOME

8. The Chairman welcomed the Knowepark Primary School representatives to the meeting.

HMle Report

9. There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Officer Schools to consider the findings of the HMle inspection report in respect of Knowepark Primary School, which was inspected in April 2014. Also circulated were copies of a letter to parents/carers, the School Improvement Plan 2014/15 and School Improvement Report 2014/15. The report outlined the findings of the inspection in terms of the school's particular strengths as well as the key points for action. The key strengths identified were: The introduction of Big Maths had ensured significant improved maths ability across all stages; Science had become high profile in classroom practice; A permanent Support for Learning teacher had enabled clear achievable targets to be set for identified pupils in agreement with class teachers and parents; Teachers' plans ensured breadth, balance and application across the curriculum. The main points for action were defined as: Continue to develop assessment across all stages within the school; Develop outdoor learning to ensure all pupils had many opportunities to experience this both within the school grounds and beyond; Continue to develop problem solving in particular within the maths curriculum; Embedding the key work involving critical reading across all stages.

10. The headteacher, Ms McGinley, reported that there had been a lack of leadership, now they had in place, a deputy head teacher and had recently appointed a principal teacher. All staff were involved in developing the curriculum and there was an understanding by parents and children of the teachers' roles. There had also been a concern at the lack of self-evaluation in the school; all staff were involved in weekly self-evaluation, questioning and analysing what was working in the classrooms. Staffs were also given suggestions on how they could improve and provide evidence of their successes. Teachers planned well focused lessons, which were well differentiated with learning intentions and challenges. Classrooms were organised and children well behaved; teachers managed behaviour through a nurturing approach, teaching respect. Ms McGinley went on to advise that reading targets had been exceeded; work continued on the school's critical reading, comprehension, setting targets and tracking progress.
11. In relation to the maths curriculum, children now understood concepts and applied to real problem solving. Science had advanced in school and the teacher had been recommended as a Teacher of Excellence. Ms McGinley continued that children were being taught about their responsibility as global citizens through social science and through links with a school in Ghana. The school had also introduced a quality assurance programme – monitoring jotters, children's behaviour and involving parents in the process. The Parent Council had their own events, raised money and contributed to the school's Shine programme – which gave every child in school the opportunity to improve in an area which was not reading and writing. The headteacher concluded by stating that the next steps were to develop outdoor learning, early learning, provide more opportunities for children to contribute to a record of their learning, embed formative assessment and liaise positively with parents and outside agencies.
12. The Parent Council representative, Ms Brown, advised that the school was unrecognisable from where it had been. Staff had worked well with parents and children and it was a joy to be involved in the school. Children had continuity and lesson plans were clear. The next stage was for the school to consolidate what it had achieved. The Parent Council made a meaningful contribution to the life of school, this year they started a Facebook page which made the school more visible and engaged with parents.
13. The Headteacher answered questions with regard to encouraging parental involvement and ensuring that the opportunity associated with the Selkirk Early Years Centre was maximised for the benefit of children and families. The Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and commended on the progress they had made in relation to the points for action identified.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) **to commend Mrs McGinley and her staff at Knowepark Primary School for the hard work undertaken in achieving due recognition for the progress made;**
- (b) **to continue to develop the flourishing partnership with parents in a variety of ways;**
- (c) **to continue to develop the 'pupil voice' within the school;**
- (d) **to ensure that the opportunity associated with the Selkirk Early Years Centre was maximised for the benefit of all children and families; and**
- (e) **to ensuring pace and challenge was achieved for high achieving pupils in all areas of the curriculum.**

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.