

25 June 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter on East Park School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Head of Education (HoE) and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in April 2018. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and young people and worked closely with the HoE and staff. We heard from the HoE and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's and young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Continue to aim for continuity and stability within staff teams working with teaching groups. This would ensure that children and young people benefit from consistency in relationships and that support staff know them and understand their needs well.

The HoE promotes team work through regular collegiate meeting with teachers. As a result, teachers are improving the quality children's and young people's learning experiences. Focused professional discussions are helping to develop a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Teachers regularly reflect on their approaches to learning and teaching. They are also encouraged, through peer observations, to identify how to improve each other's practice. Collaborative working between teachers, learning support workers (LSWs) and residential support workers (RSW) is beginning to provide more consistent support and practice in classrooms.

The school has made good progress in recruiting teachers with experience of working with children and young people with additional support needs. The school's effective induction programme is helping teachers build their skills quickly to meet the needs of learners. Newly appointed LSWs benefit from an extensive training programme in Makaton and physical intervention. This training is delivered effectively by senior learning support workers. Children and young people enjoy warm, caring relationships with staff who understand their individual needs well.

Staff know children and young people well. They continue to provide a nurturing and calm environment. Teachers, LSWs and RSWs are beginning to work well together in class. They demonstrate positive relationships with each other and with children and young people. This is resulting in children feeling safe, comfortable and ready to learn.

Implement effective monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching to improve consistency in learners' experiences, the pace of learning, challenge and task planning to meet the differing needs of learners.

Children and young people follow bespoke personalised timetables. Staff work hard to incorporate personalisation and choice into children's and young people's learning activities.

The curriculum enables children and young people to improve their learning. Opportunities for personal achievement are becoming a strength of the school.

Senior leaders have clear systems in place to monitor and evaluate lessons regularly. There is an improving picture in terms of the quality of teaching. Children and young people are more active in their learning. Staff use an increasing range of communication aids to support children's and young people's understanding of tasks and activities. Most children and young people are engaging in a variety of learning experiences. These include, independent tasks, small group activities and outdoor learning. Most children and young people are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their learning. Staff are increasingly planning tasks and activities which are built on children's and young people's aspirations and interests, and which help develop their curiosity.

Improve approaches to tracking and assessment of learners' progress so that individual children and young people can better achieve their potential.

The school has embedded their tracking of attainment and achievement through the continued use of specific milestones. Approaches to tracking and monitoring are consistently used across the school, with all staff contributing to the assessment process. Supported by experienced colleagues, new teaching staff are building their confidence in measuring children's and young people's progress.

Further explore ways to improve communication with parents and key staff in placing authorities including partners in health.

Almost all parents reported in the Education Scotland pre-inspection questionnaire that they are happy with the head teacher's leadership and management of the school. The HoE has taken steps to build positive relationships with parents and help them become more involved in the school. Parents appreciate the HoE's 'open door' policy and her approachability. They report that she helps them to work effectively with the school to meet their child's needs. Parents feel welcomed, listened to and know that their ideas will be acted upon. They are confident that they can talk to the HoE should they have an issue.

Parents' value daily diaries which describe the activities children and young people have engaged in at school. Diaries also include helpful information on nutritional and fluid intakes and personal support needs. In addition, parents receive regular phone calls and emails from the school about their child's learning and wellbeing. The HoE encourages all staff to send 'good news' postcards to parents to celebrate their child's achievements in the school. A regular newsletter informs parents about learner's achievements across the school. The newsletter also provides details of community events, class activities, staff changes and diary dates. Social media is used effectively to engage extended family members in the life of the school.

Recently introduced parent forums are well attended. These forums provide opportunities for parents to learn alongside their child. Recent events include art therapy, understanding guardianship and transitions. Parents talk positively about these events which are helping them to be more involved in the life of the school.

Key partners talk very positively about their relationships with the head teacher. Partners report that they receive regular updates on learner's progress. They are involved in setting clear targets to help children and young people to continue to make progress. Relationships between partners and staff are respectful, supportive and positive.

Address the identified weaknesses in leadership and management of change in order to enhance the wellbeing of children, young people and staff.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) continue to take an active role in ensuring school improvement through appropriate governance arrangements. Regular communication between the Board and the school leadership team, via the Executive Director, is ensuring close scrutiny of school improvement priorities.

The HoE is working very effectively with her depute and the acting principal teacher. She is respected by staff and is working well with teachers to improve the quality of learner's experiences. Aided by her monitoring processes, the HoE is beginning to challenge teachers to plan lessons more effectively to better meet the needs of learners. In doing so, teachers will be better placed to direct and oversee the LSWs role in supporting children's and young people's learning.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The Board of Trustees will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its school.

Sue Williams
HM Inspector