

28 May 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter on St Crispin's School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and The City of Edinburgh Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in January 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 headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher 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 learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

The school needs to take immediate action to review how it manages behaviour to ensure that it protects the wellbeing of all learners.

Across almost all classes, there is a calm and supportive ethos in which most children and young people are engaged in their learning. Since the last inspection, staff have participated in professional learning activities to enable them to support children and young people better. The number of incidents of challenging behaviour involving pupils has reduced significantly. New approaches to recording and monitoring incidents of challenging behaviour have been introduced. These approaches allow staff and senior leaders to reflect on incidents and identify strategies to minimise the impact of challenging behaviour. The senior leadership team should continue to analyse information related to challenging behaviour in order to reduce the number of incidents even further. The staffing situation in the school has stabilised since the previous inspection. Staff report that morale is improving and they feel well supported.

The school needs to focus all self-evaluation activities on improving outcomes for learners.

Since taking up post in March 2018, the headteacher has identified a number of relevant priorities for improvement. Almost all actions within the school improvement plan are appropriate and are leading to positive outcomes. For example, children and young people are making good use of communication systems and they are able to make choices and offer their views. As a result of self-evaluation, the senior leadership team and staff recognised the need to improve parental engagement. There is now an increase in the number of parents and carers attending meetings and events about their child's learning. Staff and partners are more involved in identifying and reviewing priorities for improvement. They have good opportunities to contribute to developments within the school such as the recently devised learning and teaching policy. Staff would now benefit from opportunities to visit other schools and consider practice within similar settings. As they continue to improve approaches to self-evaluation, staff should work in partnership with parents to ensure they are more involved in school improvement.

Staff need to improve how they plan and deliver lessons in order to provide sufficient challenge for all children and young people.

Most teachers use a range of learning and teaching approaches, underpinned by sensory media, to engage children and young people in learning. There is a consistent communication friendly environment across the school. In all lessons, visual timetables, objects of reference, pictures and symbols are used well. In most lessons, children and young people respond well to personalised strategies and individualised support from teachers and pupil support assistants. The headteacher and staff have recently reviewed approaches to learning and teaching in the school to identify good practice. This is at an early stage of development. Staff still need to ensure that all children and young people benefit from lessons that provide sufficient pace and challenge. In the majority of classes, staff need to increase time spent on purposeful learning activities. The school should consider ways in which children and young people can be supported to understand the purpose of their own learning.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with The City of Edinburgh Council that we intend to take.

Monica McGeever
HM Inspector