

S44. Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Centre Progress Report

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services presenting the findings of Education Scotland's progress visit of Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class.

The Inspection of Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery was undertaken in January 2018 as part of Education Scotland's inspection programme.

Education Scotland published the report on 24th April 2018, which was in the form of a high level, parent friendly summary of the inspection findings. The report included evaluations of the key aspects of the work of the school measured against Quality Indicators. A number of strengths were noted as well as key actions for improvement.

During the visit inspectors noted 'Online videos, creative use of social media' when supporting children and families as they moved from the ELCC to the school. Members asked what mitigations were in place to ensure child's safety on these platforms. The Education Service Managers clarified that parental consent was sought prior to any posts online; in cases where permission was not granted, a child's identity was protected through distorting their face. In terms of mitigations, all technology and Apps were filtered and protected by the Council – all programmes used within schools were tailored and mitigated to the age group. Ms Jay assured committee that the firewalls utilised by the Council were powerful and kept children safe.

Members referred to a point raised in 2018 regarding children who were transitioning to high school as there was the intention to ensure their level of education was suitable for high school. They asked if work had been carried out. The Education Service Manager explained that since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Council had provided in-depth guidance to schools about the transition to high school – this was not specific to Slamannan Primary School. As part of the guidance, children who were below the hoped achieved level were to be supported and monitor their accelerated progress. Ms Jay would refer back to committee at a later meeting with specific information on children who attended Slamannan Primary School.

Following a question on how levels of attainment compared to other schools within the area, the Education Service Manager explained that Slamannan Primary School sat in the middle in terms of attainment within their cluster. This was also the case when comparing attainment across the Falkirk area. Ms Jay emphasised that this was an improvement as back in 2018, the school performed in the bottom quartile. She explained that literacy encompassed reading, writing, listening and talking and when focusing on each element, performance that needed the most work was reading.

In terms of how Pupil Equity Funding was utilised, investment was given to Support in Learning and Learning Engagement. Additional staffing was also given to the Centre which was scheduled to end in August 2022. The PEF helped target learning groups, a great deal of money dedicated to

community health and wellbeing and investment in reading and writing programmes.

The committee asked if any of the lessons learned through the process that Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Childcare Class had been through could be shared with other schools. Ms Jay explained that there was a triage system with the ELCC team, Education Scotland Officer and Falkirk Council Officer which had been involved in self-assessments and had since proven to be successful. She highlighted the journey the ELCC had taken as there was a high turnover of staff as well as a movement in location, all of which could be valuable to share with other locations.

Members noted that 'practitioners have limited strategies to support children with barriers to learning and urgently require professional learning in a range of disorders' and asked what specialist training was available. The Education Service Manager explained there was a Staged Intervention Programme which provided staff with different levels of support as children's needs grow in complexity. With each stage of complexity, specialist training was available. Specific programmes were available depending on the needs presented such as Autism and social & emotional difficulties. Speech & Language Therapists were also utilised to ensure school environments were as communication friendly as possible.

The committee noted the improvements made by the school and staff, particularly during the difficult period of the pandemic, and commended all the work done so far.

Decision

The Scrutiny Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress which has been made, particularly in the Early Learning and Childcare Centre;**
- (2) noted that the Director of Children's Services staff will continue to work with the school to monitor progress towards meeting the identified areas for improvement; and**
- (3) requested a follow up report in the event that there is a further inspection in 18 months**