

To: Education and Children Policy Board

On: 3 November 2016

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Further Inspection of Clippens School, Linwood

1. Summary

- 1.1. Clippens School was inspected by Education Scotland, in January 2016, as part of its continuing engagement with the school. The letter to parents published by Education Scotland on 4 October 2016 is attached as an appendix to this report. The letter to parents is also available from the director of children's services or from the Education Scotland website www.educationscotland.gov.uk
 - 1.2. The purpose of the school inspection was to evaluate the quality of education and see how the school had improved its work.
 - 1.3. Although the report notes that children and young people at the school continue to learn and achieve, Education Scotland did not feel that there had been any significant improvements since the last inspection. As a result, our area lead officer will maintain contact with Children's Services as the school merges with Kersland School and Hollybush pre-five centre.
 - 1.4. Children's services has an agreed set of procedures for responding to inspection reports. The school and the service has already undertaken a focused review of the school and prepared an action plan indicating how they will address the points for action in the report, and share this plan with parents. In addition, the school continues to be supported in its improvement by children's services.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the education and children policy board are asked to note the Education Scotland further inspection report on Clippens School.
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3. Background

- 3.1. Education Scotland undertook published its first inspection report on Clippens School in April 2014. A report on its further inspection was published in May 2015.

The most recent report, which was published in October 2016 and attached as an appendix to this report, was as a result of the further inspection in May 2016.

- 3.2. The report noted that children and young people continue to learn and achieve in the school and that they are praised and supported by staff in their achievements and development. Nevertheless, the school has been subject to a number of unavoidable changes in senior management and large-scale changes to teaching staff. This has had an impact on the pace of improvement in the school.
- 3.3. A new head teacher was appointed in Autumn 2015 to Clippens School to take forward the improvement actions from the last inspection and also to merge the school with Kersland School and Hollybush pre-five centre into Riverbrae School.
- 3.4. A focused review of the school was undertaken by Children's Services in June 2016 to further support the school in its improvement. An action plan was developed as a result of this focused review which is currently being implemented in the school and supported by Children's Services' staff.
- 3.5. Progress on the action plan is monitored by children's services on a regular basis.
- 3.6. Children's services welcomes the process of audit undertaken by Education Scotland as supportive to continuous improvement in Renfrewshire schools. The inspection report will be used by the school and the service in the context of supporting and developing the quality of educational provision.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People

- High standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society.

Community Care, Health and Well-being

- By providing an environment which encourages care, welfare and development, establishments play a crucial role in developing children and young people so that they become responsible citizens. The school and nursery's success in promoting healthy lifestyles is evaluated as part of the quality assurance process.

Empowering our Communities

- High standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society.

Greener	- Participation in the eco-schools programme encourages young people to become environmentally aware.
Jobs and the Economy	- The quality assurance process contributes to our young people becoming successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

4. Legal Implications

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

None.

10. Risk Implications

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

List of Background Papers

None.

Children's Services

TMcE

25 October 2016

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4 October 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Clippens School
Renfrewshire Council**

In April 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in May 2015. 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 how the school's context and practice has changed. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work.

Since the last inspection visit in March 2015 there have been major changes in the school which have had a disruptive effect on learning. The acting headteacher and both of the previous deputy headteachers left at the end of June 2015. The headteacher was appointed in September 2015, two acting deputy headteachers were appointed in August 2015 and seven teachers have been appointed since August 2015. Furthermore, the headteacher has had to spend considerable time preparing for the merger of two other establishments with Clippens and the move to new, purpose built premises. We were able to find out how well children and young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

Children and young people continue to learn and achieve. However, teachers are not consistently sharing the purpose of lessons and as a result, children and young people do not always have a clear understanding of what they are trying to learn. Children and young people have few opportunities to make choices in lessons and in other aspects of school life. As a consequence, children and young people have not taken more responsibility for their own learning. The Pupil Forum and the Eco Committee provide opportunities for children and young people to express their views and make a contribution to the life of the school.

Teaching staff continue to praise children and young people in lessons for their achievements. These successes are recorded with school certificates and celebrated in weekly assemblies. Children and young people are continuing to make progress with their personal and social development and learning across the curriculum. The school continues to make use of Scottish Qualifications Awards, Saltire Awards and Royal Yaghting Association Awards to recognise young people's attainment and achievements. The school should improve their approaches to measuring how well learners have progressed with their attainment and achievement. Data on the National Qualifications unit awards taken by young people last session was not available.

How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

Overall, teaching staff are using an appropriate range of tasks, activities and resources. They are continuing to develop a total communication approach with the children and young people. The school was aware of the need for more training in this area to enable staff to better meet the needs of pupils. A few teachers make very good use of the outdoor areas and technology to improve the quality of learning but there is still scope for further improvement. The wellbeing indicators are being used in reviews of children and young people and a number of parents have added to the profiles of their children. The school should take this information into account when setting individual targets.

Teachers plan learning across all aspects of school life and continue to make use of learning opportunities in the community. The school should ensure that programmes of learning are rigorous, challenging and progressive, and that children and young people receive the entitlements set out in Curriculum for Excellence. There is a need to introduce better approaches to help pupils recognise the skills they are learning or have achieved. The school should have clear programmes in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and digital learning. The headteacher introduced daily physical activity sessions with a range of partners for most children and young people. These should now be reviewed to ensure that the activities are appropriate and that individuals' progress is recorded. The change in deployment of instructors and additional support needs assistants to largely class based roles has reduced the number of therapies for children and young people. The timetables of young people would be improved with better planned learning activities and targets.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

There have been no significant improvements in the school since the last inspection visit. The headteacher has carried out self-evaluation activities with each class. These have resulted in the identification of areas for further development but they have not prepared well the way for improvement and have impacted on staff morale. The majority of teaching staff feel that communication in the school could be improved and that they are not consulted sufficiently about all of the changes which take place. The prospect of merging with other colleagues was also a concern to a number of staff. The headteacher inherited an improvement plan but this has not been a strong driver for change. The school now needs a simple plan to help staff to build on their strengths and take the school forward. The acting deputy headteachers have provided support for the new staff. However, induction programmes need to be improved. A systematic programme of professional learning is also needed to help teaching staff to meet more effectively the complex needs of children and young people.

What happens next?

The school has been through a challenging period as a result of staff changes. It now has a permanent headteacher to take it forward and merge with the other two establishments. Our Area Lead Officer will maintain contact with Renfrewshire Council to monitor progress and we will work with the school to build capacity for improvement.

Terry Carr
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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