



West Lothian
Council



Mid Calder Primary School

Standards & Quality Report

Session 2014/2015

Introduction

The West Lothian Context

West Lothian Council is committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best start in life and are ready to succeed by following the principles of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

Within Curriculum for Excellence, every child and young person is entitled to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3-18. Those planning the curriculum have a responsibility to work in partnership with others to enable children and young people to move smoothly between key transition points, building on prior learning and achievement in a manner appropriate to the learning needs of the individual. This should ensure that young people are well placed to move into positive destinations and adult life.

The Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction and our priorities for West Lothian Council. There are eight priorities that we, and our community, believe can make a lasting and sustainable impact on the local area and improve the lives of residents in West Lothian.

Priority 1: Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years

Priority 2: Improving the employment position in West Lothian

Priority 3: Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children

Priority 4: Improving the quality of life for older people

Priority 5: Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality

Priority 6: Reducing crime and improving community safety

Priority 7: Delivering positive outcomes on health

Priority 8: Protecting the built and natural environment

The Corporate Plan informs Education Services Management Plan to ensure our work impacts positively on services for children and young people. Education Services focuses particularly on priorities 1, 2 and 3.

Education Services Management Plan

Education Services works towards achieving the key strategic aims of the council, in partnership with schools. In particular, Education Services aims to improve opportunities for children and young people by:

- Raising standards of attainment and achievement
- Improving employability and positive destinations for all school leavers
- Improving the learning environment
- Promoting equality of access to education
- Developing values and citizenship
- Promoting learning for life and encouraging a creative, enterprising and ambitious outlook.

Working with a range of partners, the key purpose of our work is to continuously raise attainment and achievement for all children and young people in West Lothian, ensuring that our young people succeed in securing a positive and sustained destination after school.

We want to know how well we are doing this and how we can improve. We are continuously evaluating what we do and how it makes a difference to our learners. In moving forward together we have been asking ourselves - staff, pupils, parents/carers and stakeholders - key questions which are contained within this Standards and Quality Report. Our self-evaluation is in the pages that follow, along with our key areas for development for session 2015-16. This report is set within the context of CfE and GIRFEC and measured against the quality indicators within *Child at the Centre*, *How good is Our School 3?* and *CfE National expectations: Self-evaluation resource*.

The progress of the areas we developed in our 2014-2015 School Improvement Plan (SIP) is outlined in *Appendix 1*.

Context of the School

Mid Calder Primary School is a non-denominational school, serving the village of Mid Calder. The school, which was built in 1977, and refurbished in 2004, provides bright and well-equipped accommodation for pupils and staff. The current head teacher took up post in January 2014 and the Depute Head Teacher (DHT) took up post in April 2014. The Principal Teacher is retiring in June 2015 and an acting Principal Teacher will take up post in August 2015. The school is of semi open-plan construction and hosts a separate nursery unit on campus. There are plans in place to build a new nursery building that is linked to the school to be completed by June 2016. In the session 2014-15, the school roll is 270 (11 classes), plus 30 places for children in the morning nursery class and 20 children in the afternoon nursery class. A significant number of the pupils come from out with the catchment area, as a result of parental placing requests. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is 8.5%. The school has received awards over the last five years for Learning through Technology, Global Citizenship, Eco Schools, Fairtrade, Enterprise, International Education, together with several European Quality Labels.

The school is committed to raising attainment and has focused on improving teaching and learning within literacy and numeracy. As part of the school's commitment to self-evaluation, the school took part in a validation self-evaluation in March 2014 and February 2015.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve? (1.1; 2.1)

We are committed to raising standards of attainment and achievement for all our pupils and overall we are making steady progress.

Strengths

Together we have developed our vision in partnership with all stakeholders and we have a clear sense of direction for continuous improvement.

Almost all of our learners are successful, confident, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Most are personally and socially adept and are successful in a range of activities for personal and wider achievements. This includes residential experiences for primary four to seven pupils which promotes independence; social skills and resilience. The breakfast club is well established and promotes pupils responsibility and well-being including physical activity. Staff are very welcoming and supportive of the children.

In our school and nursery, learners are treated with equality, fairness and respect. We continue

to promote active learning, learning through play and collaborative working. Progress has been made to provide learners with more opportunities to engage in their learning and discuss their next steps. We now plan to ensure that this happens more consistently and effectively across the school and nursery.

The introduction of pupil voice groups has enabled all pupils to share their views and recognise that their views are sought and acted on. Most pupils have a good sense of responsibility as well as a commitment to improvement and are developing their leadership skills as they drive forward school improvements. Almost all of our learners are motivated and eager participants in their learning. Almost all of our learners feel safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible and help to develop these qualities in others.

Our school improvement plan has made an impact on improving the achievements and attainment of our learners within literacy and maths. Most children are making very good progress from their prior learning in writing. At the early level most children are making better progress in numeracy through the introduction of Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL). At second level grouping to support differentiation in the teaching of numeracy and maths skills is better meeting the needs of all learners. Almost all learners are making progress in their learning from prior levels of attainment. We are starting to use the analysis of adaptive testing results to enable us to identify areas for improvement and help us to validate our professional judgement about learners' attainment and achievement.

Areas for Development

- Continue to develop consistent high quality feedback
- Continue to raise attainment of all pupils in maths and literacy
- Continue to develop systems which will have a positive impact on pupil attainment and achievement

How well is the school helping children and young people to develop and learn? (5.1; 5.3)

We regularly review and refresh our curriculum rationale with all stakeholders and we continue to improve the quality of our curriculum.

Strengths

The school and nursery class are developing learning and teaching in line with Curriculum for Excellence. This session, progressive, skills-based progression pathways developed from experiences and outcomes are being implemented in all curriculum areas with a focus on maths and language to ensure breadth, depth and progression in learning across the school.

In almost all classes, children are given the opportunity to engage in learning French allowing children to extend their knowledge of basic vocabulary as well as developing their understanding of the French culture. In almost all classes staff use ICT as a tool for teaching and are increasing the use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum. As a result pupils are having more opportunities to learn independently and to enrich learning experiences for children. The nursery curriculum is based on learning through play, both indoors and outdoors, which allows children to experience all curricular areas at the early level whilst developing problem-solving, creativity and social skills. Staff ensure that they engage and respond to interests of the children.

The newly introduced collaborative clusters allow teachers to plan across stages to ensure consistency of learning for pupils and to ensure progression within a level which is leading to improved learning experiences for pupils.

The lowest and highest 20% in each class are identified and support/challenge for these groups of pupils is agreed, however, these strategies now need to be fully embedded in practice. Quality assurance procedures continue to highlight the need to improve the pace; challenge and differentiation of lessons in most classes to ensure learning activities fully meet the needs of all learners. We now need to continue to develop consistent approaches to assessing pupils' prior knowledge in language and mathematics.

Pupils are becoming more actively involved in their learning and we need to continue to develop a range of strategies to meet the varying needs of learners. We are committed to providing more effective support and challenge and are developing together more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning to take place. We will continue to monitor the balance of pupil/teacher dialogue to ensure that we respond appropriately to pupil responses and allow pupils to express ideas and ask questions more often.

The Support for Learning teacher is building the capacity to meet the needs of all learners more effectively and in particular those at risk of missing out. Through termly meetings we identify, review and evaluate learners' needs underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Individualised Education Plans (IEP) are regularly reviewed and all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process of setting and reviewing targets to ensure appropriate progress is made by pupils.

The PE specialist supports staff to ensure two hours of weekly quality PE is embedded in their class timetable ensuring that children receive their full entitlements within the broad and general education.

All staff are involved in developing a shared understanding of what interdisciplinary learning looks like in the school which reflects national guidance and they are now using a new planning format to ensure that children are experiencing breadth and depth across the curriculum. The majority of staff consult with pupils at the planning stage and throughout the learning context in order to respond to pupil voice. In the nursery, children are involved in planning their learning through the use of floor books to allow for child centered learning.

The nursery curriculum provides valuable opportunities for the development of talking and listening skills through role play and real life experiences, for example the pizza restaurant and visits to the post office. Staff are continuing to embed a listening ethos within the nursery to continue to respond to the interests of the children to ensure personalisation and choice for children. This good practice now needs to be extended through quality interactions and interventions with adults.

Recently, staff have been developing children's thinking skills within reading through a range of approaches in the nursery and through home learning links.

Parents and partners acknowledge the improving practices and procedures to support children with additional needs at times of transition. Primary/secondary transition procedures have recently been refreshed and extended to provide experiences of the secondary curriculum.

Pupils are excited and motivated by their visits and are more confident in moving forward in their learning at high school. Nursery/primary transition provides opportunities for children and parents to get to know the school building, routines and key staff. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure children and pupils experience appropriate progression in their learning.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop robust and consistent approaches to moderation and assessment using the significant aspects of learning
- To continue to develop learning and teaching to ensure appropriate pace, challenge, support and differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils

- To review the provision and resources in the early level including opportunities for play
- Continue to increase children's knowledge and understanding of the experiences and outcomes so they can talk more meaningfully about their learning which is recorded through improved profiling

How well is the school improving the quality of its work? (5.9)

We are committed to self-evaluation in order to move the school forward. We are continuing to develop robust self-evaluation procedures involving all our stakeholders.

Strengths

We are committed to improving our school through a range of evaluation and quality assurance procedures. We share good practice to enhance pupil learning. This session we have implemented a peer observation model within a number of departments to share learning and teaching strategies within the school to enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the school.

Staff continually undertake evidence based discussion linked to key quality indicators from How Good Is Our School (HGIOS) and Child at the Centre (CAC) in evaluating aspects of the work of the school. This enables staff to have a shared understanding of where we are and what we need to do to improve pupil experiences. We now actively seek feedback from our stakeholders in a range of ways and we use this information to identify strengths and areas for development. In the nursery we are developing effective systems to develop the views of all our stakeholders to ensure that the nursery ethos and curriculum reflects the needs of all.

Leadership at all levels is developing through a range of working groups and coordinator roles, staff are encouraged to take ownership of areas for development in order to drive forward improvement across the school.

Progress of all learners is being monitored and tracked within literacy and numeracy and staff are continuing to develop confidence in this area. We identify, review and evaluate learners' needs, including those whose needs are significantly different from those of their peers. We do this through working closely with our learners, their parents and partner services.

The introduction of Personal Learning Communities gives staff opportunities to engage with professional reading with colleagues and we will continue to promote this with all staff. Professional learning impacts on the work of the majority of staff to support professional development as well as the development of the school. All staff are beginning to engage with Professional Update and to develop an understanding of the expectations of the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Professional Standards as a starting point for personal reflection and self-evaluation.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop robust self-evaluation activities to effect improvement and increase capacity for self-evaluation across the school and nursery
- Continue to develop the use of the GIRFEC self-evaluation toolkit with all relevant partners to identify next steps in well-being

How well is the school working with partners? (8.1)

We work well with our partners to support and enhance learning for all pupils.

Strengths

We have effective partnership working which makes a difference to the quality of support for learners. Staff are committed to the aims of joint working and engage actively with partners, community representatives and agencies. Staff work well with others to ensure that all children, including those most vulnerable, are well supported and their learning and pastoral needs are identified and addressed through transitions. The nursery link well with a wide range of local community partners to enhance the early level curriculum to give real life contexts for learning.

This commitment to working with our partners ensures that we are fully supporting the needs of the children in our service. We provide effective support through partnerships with educational psychologists, health services and social workers. We are clear about our respective roles and responsibilities and have very good opportunities for partnership working. Staff ensure that all pupils have experience of enterprise activities, community and cluster involvement and sporting initiatives resulting in pupils being given the opportunity to work and interact with the wider school community, developing skills in problem-solving and decision making. This session all classes have established a business link within their class interdisciplinary context to enhance learning and allow children to build skills associated with enterprise and employability.

We value parents as partners in their child's learning and the newly designed school blog allows parents to easily access information regarding the school. The termly learning letter; fortnightly blog posts; and termly sharing the learning afternoons allow parents/carers to know what their child is learning in school and how they can further support at home. We involve adult helpers in contributing to the life of the school to enhance pupil experiences.

Areas for Development

- To continue to develop parents' understanding of their child's next steps in learning.
- To further strengthen our links with the wider community with a focus on the world of work

How does the school ensure equality and inclusion and promote diversity across the school?

The school was awarded the Rights Respecting Schools Level 1 award in June 2013 and the majority of children show tolerance and respect for each other. The whole school community takes an active role in promoting the care and welfare of others, including globally through our partnerships with schools in other countries. Staff take positive and proactive steps to ensure that factors, such as the learning environment, family circumstances, health, diversity or disability, or social or emotional factors, which may hinder learning, are identified and addressed effectively. When a factor hindering learning has been identified, key members of staff become responsible for ensuring positive outcomes for individual learners and for working with parents and other agencies.

Children and young people have frequent opportunities to reflect on and discuss their rights and to demonstrate concern for and acceptance of others. Almost all pupils are now better at being able to recognise their rights and how other children's rights are impacted by the actions of others, encouraging them to become more responsible. Respect for diversity and understanding of differences and values are given a high value in the life of the school. All children are given encouragement to share their views and most can act as positive role

models for others. The curriculum and culture promote a positive appreciation of equality, social justice and diversity in society. Diversity is promoted and celebrated within and outwith the school community. Incidents of inequality, racism, sectarianism, bullying and discrimination are few but if they happen, they are dealt with openly, promptly and consistently.

In our school, culture and language, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and additional support needs do not become barriers to participation and achievement. The majority of young people willingly assume positions of responsibility and are becoming increasingly involved as active and responsible members of the community. All pupils are a member of a Junior Leadership group to lead improvements in the school, local and global community. They take active roles in charitable work, building strong local partnerships and developing and sustaining international links. All members of the school community strive to plan, consult and work collaboratively to improve the school environment and the experiences the school provides for its pupils.

Improvement Priority 2015 -2016:

Raising Attainment

Our key areas for development to take this priority forward are:

Area for development 1: To develop robust tracking and monitoring systems incorporating GIRFEC, attainment and achievement

Area for development 2: To raise attainment in maths through improved learning and teaching of mental agility and number

Based on the above information, at this point in time, we evaluate ourselves against the quality indicators as follows:

Our school:

1.1 Improvements in performance	Satisfactory
2.1 Learners' experience	Good
5.1 Curriculum	Satisfactory
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Good
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Good
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Good

Our nursery:

1.1 Improvements in performance	Satisfactory
2.1 Learners' experience	Good
5.1 Curriculum	Satisfactory
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Satisfactory
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Very Good

Appendix 1

In session 2014- 2015, Raising Attainment was the overarching priority in the SIP. This appendix details the progress made with the specific areas for development and

again is set within the context of CfE and measured against the quality indicators within *Child at the Centre, How good is Our School 3?* and *CfE National expectations: Self-evaluation resource*.

Progress made with our areas for development Session 2014 – 2015

Area for development 1:

To further develop the teaching and assessment of writing in line with the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and moderate assessments currently being developed.

The school has made satisfactory progress in this area.

Evidence indicated:

- A breadth of genres are now being taught in writing lessons across the school ensuring that children are experiencing a range of writing opportunities and are now aware of different writing styles.
- Staff are engaged in the moderation of writing through the use of the Scottish Criterion for writing allowing children to develop their own targets for writing as well as tracking progress.
- Children have been given a clear purpose for writing through real life contexts for writing through author visits, cinema trips and theatre performances resulting in increased motivation and relevance to learning.
- Writing has been a focus in some Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) contexts allowing children to consolidate and apply their literacy skills.
- Writing has a raised profile within the school as children's writing successes are celebrated through the Star Writer approach and work displayed at entrance area resulted in increased motivation for learning and children recognising the importance of writing across the curriculum.
- A consistent approach to the sequencing of language lessons to allow children to apply their language skills and making the curriculum more joined up.
- There is a shared vision for the teaching of writing across the school resulting in a consistent approach to the teaching and assessing of writing.
- Through the implementation of a school correction code there is a consistency of expectations.
- Targeted support in writing has ensured effective differentiation and impacted positively on attainment.
- There is an increased use of ICT in writing to support and challenge learners.
- Parents are notified of the termly focus of writing through the termly Learning Letters and blog posts developing the parents' understanding of the learning and teaching of writing.
- School handwriting scheme shared with parents through Parent's Evenings and on the school blog to allow parents to support the correct letter formations with their child.
- Consistency and progression in the teaching of handwriting.
- Professional dialogue with the collaborative cluster for planning takes place on a termly basis to develop a variety of stimulating contexts for writing as well as ensuring progression of writing across stages.

Next steps:

- Moderation of writing built into cluster collaboration dialogue
- Continue to use of ICT to support children and remove barriers to learning within writing
- Continue to create relevant and purposeful contexts for writing and to allow children to transfer their learning to different situations.
- Further develop writing progression pathway making links to the significant aspects of learning.
- Transference of handwriting skills to all written work.

Area for development 2:

To further develop the teaching and assessment of numeracy and maths in line with the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

The school has made satisfactory progress within this area.

Evidence indicated:

- Through embedding the maths and numeracy progression pathways has resulted in greater depth of teaching of maths contexts.
- Staff are more aware of the different resources available which has led to an improvement in the teaching and learning of number.
- Numeracy and maths has been a focus in some Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) contexts allowing children to consolidate and apply their maths skills.
- Peer observations have allowed staff to view different learning and teaching approaches and implement in lessons resulting in improved delivery of maths across the school.
- There is a shared vision for the teaching of maths across the school resulting in a consistent approach to the teaching and assessing of numeracy and maths.
- There is an increased use of ICT in writing to support and challenge learners.
- Parents are notified of the termly focus of number through the termly Learning Letters and blog posts developing the parents' understanding of the learning and teaching of number.
- Children's confidence to talk about their strategies is beginning to improve and children are more willing to have a go.
- Professional dialogue with the collaborative cluster for planning takes place on a termly basis to develop a variety of stimulating contexts for numeracy and maths as well as ensuring progression across stages.
- SEAL approaches have been implemented into the early level curriculum to ensure that children have a strong foundation of numeracy skills.
- Differentiated grouping at the second level has ensured that children needs are being met more effectively.

Next steps:

- Develop real life contexts for learning linked to the world of work to allow children to apply their numeracy and maths knowledge to a variety of contexts
- Develop consistent mathematical vocabulary across the school

- Develop the teaching and learning of mental maths and give children opportunities to apply this knowledge
- Continue to develop our numeracy and maths framework to incorporate SEAL approaches and Significant Aspects of Learning
- Continue to develop a consistent approach to assessment which reflects national guidance
- Continue to develop moderation approaches within numeracy and maths
- Develop workshops for parents within numeracy and maths to develop their understanding of where their child is within a level and how they can support their child