

Your Ref:

Our Ref:S:\Chronologies\Hottsbridge and Eaglesfield

17th June 2024

Parent / Carer
Hottsbridge Primary School

**Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing
Schools**

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Dear Parent / Carer

LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF HOTTSBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL SINCE THE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF 13th JUNE 2023.

Hottsbridge Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in March, 2023. The inspection focussed on learning, teaching and assessment and children's attainment and achievements.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Education and Learning Directorate, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by Hottsbridge Primary School since the publication of the Education Scotland report in June 2023.

The report highlighted two main aspects for development:

- Review approaches to planning and assessing children's learning. This includes ensuring lessons and activities are sufficiently challenging and well-matched to children's needs.
- The headteacher should work with staff to provide clearer direction on how to show the progress children make in their learning. She should develop more effective approaches to check children's progress and achievement to raise attainment in all areas of their learning.

As you are aware, a new Head Teacher and teaching staff have been appointed to Hottsbridge Primary School since inspection. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these points.

Review approaches to planning and assessing children's learning. This includes ensuring lessons and activities are sufficiently challenging and well-matched to children's needs.

This session, staff from Hottsbridge Primary School have worked with colleagues from their partnership school to develop a Learning and Teaching Policy. This sets an agreed minimum standard for learning and teaching experiences across the school and partnership. Extracts from this have been used to create a one-sheet lesson expectation titled 'A Good Lesson at a Glance', to guide teachers in the planning of learning experiences. These

documents have been created in consultation with all learning and teaching staff and with parents and carers. Next steps are to create a pupil friendly version and to use this agreed standard as an ongoing tool for self, peer, learner and management evaluations of learning and teaching. A 'professional development toolkit' has also been developed to support teachers in accessing relevant resources to improve practice in areas identified through these evaluations.

Planned lesson observations from the Head Teacher and peer-to-peer observations between teaching staff have concluded that differentiation is evident in all lessons and that learners are now challenged appropriately. This is also reflected in attainment data, where some pupils are performing above age-related expectations. Using How Good Is OUR School as a basis for evaluation, the Pupil Council rated the learning and teaching at Hottsbridge Primary School as 'very good' with qualitative comments relating to challenge including: "Learning is hard, but this is good" and "The teachers do a good job at giving us the right work".

All learning and teaching staff are fully involved in self-evaluation activities, using How Good Is Our School?4. The focus of self-evaluation this session has been on Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

A consistent approach to planning across all classes, with areas of focus on numeracy and mathematics and interdisciplinary learning, has been developed across the school and partnership. Planning frameworks have been reviewed and revised with relevant benchmarks added so that assessment and expected pupil progress are considered at the planning stage. Play-based pedagogies have been adopted across our entire primary age range and the school has also begun work on embedding a meta-skills framework. Next steps are to examine progression frameworks in Literacy, which will form part of the School Improvement Plan for session 2024/25. Improvements in teaching pedagogies in reading and writing in the Early and First level are also a focus.

The headteacher should work with staff to provide clearer direction on how to show the progress children make in their learning. She (now 'He'-new HT) should develop more effective approaches to check children's progress and achievement to raise attainment in all areas of their learning.

A new whole-school and partnership tracking system has been embedded and shared with teachers. Teachers have ownership of this tracking and assessment and are required to update it themselves. As part of the process, teachers are required to consider whether each individual learner is making expected age-related progress. There is now ample time in the quality assurance and moderation calendar for teachers across both schools to come together and moderate assessment, interrogate data and discuss pupil progress. The assessment calendar has been altered to reflect the assessment data uplifts within our local authority. There are fewer assessment periods than previously, but it is considered that they are higher quality and produce more robust results. The new tracking system allows teachers and senior staff to track individual learners' progress across their whole primary school career and allows comparisons to be made across Hottsbridge Primary School and the partnership. Attainment meetings are held between the Head Teacher and class

teachers, and interventions and supports are put in place for those pupils who need them. Pupils in receipt of free-school meals or clothing grants, looked after or care experienced pupils and those with additional support needs are tracked in greater depth to ensure they are receiving an equitable experience and are making appropriate progress. All pupils now have an assessment folder to show evidence of their learning across time.

Next steps include a new pupil target system where all pupils will meet with their teacher twice per term to discuss the next steps in their learning. Pupil Council and pupil focus groups have informed teachers that some learners are not clear on their next steps and there needs to be more explicit support in helping learners to understand their place in their learning journey.

Hottsbridge Primary School demonstrates a very good capacity for future improvement. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of the headteacher, staff and children. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on their progress over the last year.

Yours sincerely



Jim Brown
Assistant Director Schools (Chief Education Officer)