



## Education & Children's Services

# Education Scotland Inspection – Follow Through Procedures Progress Report to Parents

### 1 Introduction:

St John's RC Academy was inspected in February 2014. The report on the inspection by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMI) was published in April 2014.

The school, with support from the Local Authority, prepared a full plan for improvement which has had a positive impact on a wide range of aspects within the school. The headteacher and staff have worked co-operatively with authority staff to take forward the areas identified in the original HMI report as requiring development and the authority endorses the information within this report.

Further information about the broader achievements of the school is contained in the school's annual Standards & Quality report published in September.

### 2 Areas for Improvement – Evaluation of Progress:

The initial inspection report published in **April 2014** identified 3 main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made to date in addressing each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

#### **Area for improvement 1**

***Improve approaches to planning progression in children's and young people's skills across all areas of the curriculum.***

#### **Evaluation of progress and impact:**

Since our very positive inspection in February 2014, the school has made good progress in making improvements to our approaches to planning progression of our learners' skills across all eight curriculum areas.

To do this we have built upon the good practice already evident in the school. In relation to quality assurance and moderation, we have been working with colleagues from across the school and from our local management group of schools, which is

improving our shared understanding of skills progression. This has included moderation events focused particularly on literacy and numeracy across all aspects of learning. We have also worked with an education officer to ensure our portfolios and profiles in the primary help us to record and track skills progression, and we improved the portfolios within secondary to make them more engaging and easier to use. In nursery, the children's portfolios have also been reviewed, and this has resulted in new approaches being adopted to make it more straightforward to share learning with parents/carers and the children themselves.

Within the nursery and primary departments, we have been working to ensure that planning is more streamlined and continuous, ensuring that progression in learning from nursery into primary is seamless. We are further developing planning approaches based on Education Scotland's new support materials, helping us plan progression focusing on the significant aspects of learning. Secondary departments are also using this to review and revise their planning within the broad general education.

We are continuing to develop our whole school tracking through innovative use of data. We have improved our whole school tracking data by bringing together different streams of information, including progression across all areas of the curriculum. This is helping us to better understand individual progress and to better assess the learning needs of our children and young people. This is also helping us plan for individuals, groups and cohorts and target interventions whenever necessary.

We aim to continue to ensure that our children and young people develop their ability to talk about the skills for learning, life and work and aim to support our staff in leading these learning conversations. We will review how we gather and record our learners' achievements in and out of school and how we celebrate them within our House system and as a school. Across the curriculum, we will develop the use of Education Scotland's significant aspects of learning and progression framework to further improve our tracking of skills across all areas of the curriculum.

***Area for improvement 2***

***Improve the curriculum in the nursery through increased outdoor learning and learning in the local community.***

**Evaluation of progress and impact:**

We recognised that our nursery curriculum would be further enhanced through increased outdoor learning and increased opportunities to access learning in the local community.

Overall we consider good progress has been made to improve outdoor learning. Since the inspection, staff have visited other nurseries to learn from their good practice and develop our own. We have been developing our use of the nursery's outdoor area, creating spaces for outdoor learning and for learning outside. This has included using everyday objects which we are recycling, such as tyres to create planters. We are creating homes for minibeasts using logs, rocks and other natural materials which allow our children to explore and investigate living things. We have developed learning spaces outside to promote literacy and numeracy skills, and learning which encourages curiosity in stimulating outdoor environments using natural and everyday objects. This has increased children's interest and enjoyment in learning about the world around them and encourages them to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of contexts.

We have also been exploring the wider environment. Together with staff, the children have participated in regular nature trails in local woodland, built dens and gone for walks on the North Inch. The nursery has made good use of the school's outdoor classroom, as well as using the facilities within the Community Campus, including the community library. We have also visited a local care home, and will build on this successful visit in future. The nursery has also increased the number and variety of visitors for the children, including representatives from the emergency services, RSPB, guide dogs for the blind, etc.

The nursery staff are also working hard to better share the children's learning with parents/carers. This has included opening up the nursery more, with regular 'stay and play' sessions with parents/carers. This allows children to share their own portfolios of learning and for staff to discuss progress within the nursery environment. Feedback on this approach has been very positive from parents/carers, and we will continue to build on this practice.

Next session, we aim to build on our progress and continue to develop our use of outdoor learning and learning within the local community. We will continue to develop our outdoor learning spaces, further develop our nature trails, and increase opportunities to visit the library, care home and other community resources.

### **Area for improvement 3**

***Ensure consistently high-quality learning and teaching that meets young people's varying needs and abilities.***

**Evaluation of progress and impact:**

Much work has taken place to ensure good progress in this area. We recognise that the key to ensuring all our learners' needs are met is through high quality learning and teaching. Since the inspection, we have been building on our approaches to improving the quality of learning experiences which meet the needs of all learners in a wide variety of ways.

Staff have undertaken a wide variety of continuous professional development (CPD) activities, within whole school, department and individual settings. Whole school staff CPD has included a focus on how our school can meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our community as a result of mental health issues, abuse and poverty. A significant number of staff have been working in 'teacher learning communities' focusing on developing their practice in assessment for learning approaches and this is building a greater consistency of approach across the whole school. In the primary, pupil support assistants have benefited from a range of CPD opportunities which are developing their skills in working with pupils with particular needs. Individual staff have been improving their knowledge and skills, including at Masters level, across a wide range of activities. These activities are having a positive impact on the learning opportunities which they lead, for example, in developing pupil mentors, opening up opportunities for international learning and delivering Scottish Qualifications Authority and other qualifications.

Observations of teaching, where teachers are provided with feedback on the children's and young people's learning, have improved through paired observations across the whole school. This allows us to be more consistent with feedback which is focused on strengths and next steps.

In the secondary department we are continuing to work with our learners and their parents/carers to ensure that curriculum pathways are appropriate for all and that all of our young people achieve positive leaver destinations. We have been developing these pathways in light of the Scottish Government's 'Developing Scotland's Workforce' policy and Perth and Kinross' Enterprise and Employability strategy.

We are continuing to have a focus on learning conversations all through the school which is allowing our learners to better develop their language of learning, and enables them to talk about their progress and achievements. This is also enabling our children and young people to formulate short and long term goals.

We have also developed a number of specific approaches to improve the quality of learning and teaching at particular stages and for particular groups or individuals. In the upper stages of primary, we have reviewed our maths provision in light of current research and in consultation with staff. This is already having a positive impact on attainment in maths and numeracy, with an 8% rise this year in those who are secure at

level 2 or better by the end of P7. In primary and in the early years of secondary, we are continuing to develop approaches to peer and paired reading. Primary teachers have been auditing their classroom environments to ensure they are 'dyslexia friendly' and we continue to promote approaches to learning and teaching which take account of specific learning needs. This has included reviewing our support resources within the secondary department so that they are now more responsive and flexible. We are continuing to develop outdoor learning opportunities in the primary and secondary departments, including the P7 residential as well as the John Muir, Navigation and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards for secondary learners. For children and young people with identified needs, we have been improving targets within Individual Education Plans, Coordinated Support Plans and Additional Support Needs planning, and with the sharing of successful approaches with staff. We are also working well with partners to improve the support we can offer our learners and families. Support around the development of health and wellbeing skills, including social skills, anger management and resilience, have been particularly effective.

Improving the quality of learning and teaching and meeting the needs of all of our learners will always be central to our planning. For next session, we will continue to develop staff through appropriate CPD opportunities and seek to better engage parents in their children's learning across the whole school. We will re-launch tutor groups within the secondary department and focus on improving the delivery and impact of health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes. We will continue to develop our universal and targeted approaches to meeting learners' needs, and work in partnership with others to ensure that our young people enter sustainable positive destinations when they leave school.

**Headteacher:** *SP Hagney (Acting)*

**Date:** *23 June 2015*

**Verified by:** *Kathleen Robertson QIO  
Michael Conlon QIO*

**Comment:** St John's RC Academy was visited by a team of one Service Manager and three Quality Improvement Officers who spent a day in the school to verify the progress described in this report. Working with the Senior Leadership Team, it was concluded that the school has made good progress in overtaking the priorities for improvement and are on track to continue on its improvement journey during session 2015-16.